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John Economos
Tel: (02) 9744 6984

TELEPHONE
(editorial and general enquiries)
Tel: (02) 9566 0500

EMAIL
(editorial, advertising and general enquiries)
ABSW's EMAIL
absw@foreignlanguage.com.au
absw007@hotmail.com
FACSIMILE
(editorial, advertising and general enquiries)
(02) 9660 5736

MAILING ADDRESS
1-9 Glebe Point Road,
Glebe. NSW. 2037

EDITOR
Mark Stavroulakis
LAYOUT/TYPESETTER
Mary Quartly
PICTURE EDITOR
Carlos Furtado

CORRESPONDENTS
John Economos (Sydney)
Alan Clark (Victoria)
Glenn Davis (Brisbane)
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SCANNING
Chris Jiang
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Bill Hawthorne
PHOTOGRAPHY
-Getty Images
-Carlos Furtado

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F.L. Press P/L 1-9 Glebe Point Rd,
Glebe. NSW. 2037.
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VICTORIA:
F.L. Press P/L 72 Gipps Street,
Collingwood VIC 3066
Tel: (03) 9415 8588
Fax: (03) 9415 8944

SOUTH AUSTRALIA:
Jim Papadopoulos
143 Henley Beach Road, Mile End S.A.
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Tax probe hits Oz Football Identities

The ATO is starting to reap it's reward after a massive sting on tax evading football personalities. Hardest to feel the ATO's venomous sting are a former National Soccer League coach and a player agent.

Its believed that the former coach in question has been targeted after he failed to lodge four (4) years worth of tax returns as well as failure to disclose receipts of large sums of money that was brought in after investments had been off loaded in the UK.

The agent involved will also be asked to explain why there was non-disclosure of certain transfer income received from players transfers as well as large sums of transfer fees that have come to Australia but were not disclosed

Indian FA chasing Parramatta's Jacobs

Here we go again Aussie football fans. Only weeks away from our World Cup match against Croatia where our boys will square off against former AIS funded graduates in Simunic,Seric and Joey Didulica we now have the Indian FA sending representatives in an attempt to secure the services of Parramatta Eagles youngster Craig Jacobs.

Eighteen year old Jacobs of Indian heritage is an athletic right or left winger with lighting speed and great stamina.

THE COUCH

Inside the Australian game

Our understanding is that young Jacobs who is on the verge of first grade honours with Raul Blanco's Eagles was reluctant to accept the invitation from the Indian FA representatives.

Jacob's acknowledged that his future lied in the A–League and Australia even though he was honoured by the approach of his parents former homeland.

The couch understands that Club Marconi are looking at young Jacobs as a replacement for Tony Faria who will shortly be joining the Newcastle Jets FC.

Black Money

A-League Clubs take note, you could get embroiled in allegations of under the table payments, apparently being made by a certain player agent.

This agent who was accused of signing his players to low playing contracts receiving payments under the table and outside the salary cap.

The FFA has been made aware of this by club officials concerned not to get involved with the agent in question.

Reddy to sign

Newcastle United Jets are set to offload keeper Liam Reddy to the Queensland Roar for the new season.

The Roar will vacate a keeper position as giant shotstopper Scott Higgins has been set for overseas trials opening up a spot for Reddy who will fight for the number one jersey alongside youngster Tom Willis.

The Jets meanwhile will need two keepers as Andy Peterson has also moved on.

Coveny deal in the air

Kiwi international Vaughan Coveny was offered a $150,000 (NZ Dollars) plus a car deal with the NZ Knights but has knocked back living in New Zealand.

The Kiwi side has been struggling for talent but with the expertise of Coveny in attack, Paul Nevin's side could have seen a change of fortune in it's scoring ranks.

The Newcastle United Jets have again pushed through an offer for the Kiwi star.

Owens calls Adelaide home

Current Sydney United attacker Greg Owens has reportedly signed a two-year deal with last years Premiers Adelaide United.

The deal worth $150,000 over the two seasons was done after Owens impressed Reds coach John Kosmina during his short stint with the club last year in the finals series.

Owens scored the winner in United's 2-1 victory over the A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers over the weekend.

Van Stratten coming home

Former Australian youth international goalkeeper Jess Van Stratten is said to be on his way home with a number of A-League side's interested in the Hellas Verona star.

The Central Coast born and bred keeper is said to be closing in on a deal via his agent Leo Karis.

Having spent a good six or so seasons in Italy, once being on the books of Juventus, the highly rated keeper should not have any problems finding himself a new home in the A-League.

MCG Fireworks

Fireworks hit the MCG last Thursday and it was not only seen on the football pitch.

Close sources to 'the couch' stated that former Newcastle United Jets striker Ante Milicic and current Jets Director of Football Remo Nogarotto were embroiled in a verbal argument in front of a few shocked observers during the clash between the Socceroos and Greece.

Casey targeted

Promising Parrmatta FC star Adam Casey is said to be on the shopping lists of both the Queensland Roar and NZ Knights.

The highly rated attacker has been given a glowing report by current Socceroos Assistant Graham Arnold who believes Casey should be playing in the A-League.

I'll be ready - Kewell

Injured Socceroo star Harry Kewell is looking to return to action in time for the team's opening World Cup clash with Japan on June 12.

Kewell injured his groin in the FA Cup final earlier in the month and while his team-mates thrilled 96,000 fans in Melbourne with a 1-0 victory over Greece, Kewell had to stay in Merseyside for treatment.

"The injury is not ideal but I am expecting to be back and ready in time for the tournament," he told the Sydney Morning Herald. "I'm so disappointed that I couldn't get back to Melbourne for the game against Greece but it was out of my control. I now have to focus on what is within my control, and that's working hard. My club, Liverpool, have been great in helping to get me back in action and ready for the World Cup. The Australian team physio, Les Gelis, has been excellent as well. I am in the best of hands."

During his recovery, the former Leeds player has had plenty of time to think about a tough Group F which contains, Japan, Croatia and World Champions Brazil.

"People might say that the Brazil game is the biggest but this is a World Cup where all three group games are important," he said.

"To me, Japan and Croatia are just as big. We need to win, or at least not lose. It's great being in a group where all the matches have something at stake and where each team, if they have a good day, can win.

"I'm glad we are playing Brazil," he said. "Australia couldn't ask for anything more after being away from the finals for so many years. You look at their team and they have a lot of big names and potential match winners. I'm not going to single out any players because they're playing as a team and we are playing as a team.

"We have done our homework on Brazil and Ron Smith, Australia's technical manager, has been very thorough in checking them out. We know their dangers and we know their weaknesses.

"The good thing about the Australian team is that we're one unit. We all get on really well. This group of lads is one of the best I have been involved with. This will be important when we have to fight for one another on the pitch."

Kewell summed up the Socceroos plan as simple.

"Our first aim is to beat Japan, and then a result against Brazil would be good, and then beat Croatia."

Harry Kewell shown in the Netherlands this week with a new look haircut, also going through his paces with trainer Anthony Crea

MORE POWER THE KEY FOR HIDDINK

With Australia arriving in the Netherlands for a June 4 friendly against the host nation in Rotterdam, Guus Hiddink is reinforcing the message to his players.

"I like us to have control of the ball, to have control of the situation, both offensively and defensively, I like us to have control of the tempo," he said.

The Dutchman, who is preparing his players for Group F clashes with Japan, Brazil and Croatia was satisfied with the Socceroos' 1-0 victory over Greece in Melbourne on Thursday evening.

"Our organisation was good. As a coach, you are always looking how it's organised in a tactical way offensively and defensively so that you don't get caught. I think we did well.

"But we have still to work a lot. When you want to be very competitive on the World Cup level, you must retain your control during the whole game. I don't want to be pessimistic, but I am always looking at what needs to be improved."

According to the Dutch maestro, there are still plenty of issues to work on as Hiddink is preparing to start his third consecutive World Cup.

"We have to get more physical depth and strength in the upcoming days. When you are playing three games in a short time, you have to be physically top, top, top.

"We have to improve against Japan. It seems a bit pessimistic but I am full on details, on which games are decided at high international level. We lost the ball too early with straight not diagonal passes.

"Losing possession means you have to work a lot defensively when you give the ball away. We made some stray passes.

"We were overdoing it in possession in our own danger zone, doing sloppy things, maybe due to lack of top physical shape. But these are details, nothing more."

"If we don't go deep in our training session physically, we lose later on a lot of the power we need. The pay-off time is in the upcoming week in gathering more physical strength."

Qantas Futsalroos defeat Lebanon

The Qantas Futsalroos ended their AFC Futsal Championships campaign with a hard-fought 6-4 win over Lebanon, to finish second on the Group C.

Kyrgyzstan finished top of the group after defeating Kuwait 2-0, although the result would have been irrelevant even if they lost, as they had the better head-to-head record against Australia.

As he did in the match against Kuwait a day earlier, Lachlan Wright put Australia ahead after five minutes, with Miles Downie adding a second four minutes later.

Lebanon pulled one back, but Scott Manson (13'), Luke Haydon (16') put the Qantas Futsalroos out to a 4-1 lead. Lebanon added a second goal just minutes before half time.

Christopher Zeballos (30) put Australia 5-2 ahead, but Lebanon was desperate to fight back and pulled two goals back to set up a frantic final couple of minutes. Manson sealed victory with a goal right on fulltime.

The Futsalroos second place finish was not enough to qualify them for the final against Japan.

Stallions' captain Brad Maloney and United captain Joe Vrkic with the future stars of the Capitol Hill Estate Cup, Alessandro Pecora and Robert Bacic.

BLOCKBUSTER AT MARCONI STADIUM

The Stallions take a 3-1 advantage into the match, which doubles as the second leg of the Capitol Hill Estate Cup, after they stunned United in the first round clash.

In that encounter, United took a one goal lead into the break before being blown away by a second half hat-trick to Tony Faria.

United, under new coach, former Stallions legend Jean Paul de Marigny, have improved since then and have their eyes on a finals berth while the Stallions are chasing top spot and a home finals advantage.

"It's an important game for both teams and neither set of players will be holding back," Stallions coach Brian Brown said.

"There's a lot of history between these two teams and I'm sure United will be looking to get one back at us after our first meeting.

"We both play attacking football so there should be plenty in it for the fans and we'll both field very strong line-ups so I don't think there'll be too much in it."

The Capitol Hill Estate Cup was formed as part of a tribute to the clubs' most famous contest, the 1988 NSL Grand Final.

In one of the most pulsating and edge-of-your-seat matches ever played in the NSL, the Stallions prevailed 5-4 in a penalty shoot-out, after the scores were locked together at 2-2.

Both teams scored goals in extra-time and had players sent off, during the marathon match played in front of packed crowd at Parramatta Stadium.

The Stallions took home the Capitol Hill Estate Cup for the first time in 2004, thanks to a 3-0 win at home.

In a game of opportunities for both sides, the Stallions made the most of theirs, with goals to Alex Brosque, Jeromy Harris and Chad Gibson.

United turned the tables on the Stallions when they scraped home at the same venue a year later.

With the scores locked at 2-2, substitute Mile Jedinak came on to score the winner in injury time.

The Marconi Stallions play Sydney United at Marconi Stadium on Saturday, June 3, at 7.30pm with the grade 20s kick off at 5.30pm.

The present and the future.
Major sponsor Mr. Terry Leckie with Stallions captain Brad Maloney and United captain Joe Vrkic with the future stars of the Capitol Hill Estate Cup, Alessandro Pecora and Robert Bacic.

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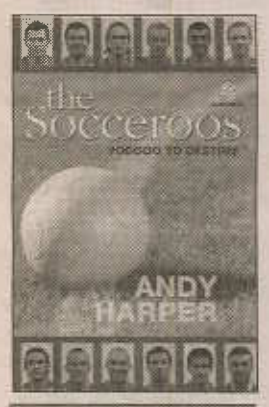

Andy Harper — author and television personality

Today *ABSW* offers our readers the chance to win a copy of Andy Harper's latest book, THE SOCCEROOS — *'voodoo to destiny'*.

'Voodoo to destiny' is an extremely informative, yet comprehensive, 360 page product which incorporates no less than 18 indepth-interviews of the current Australian World Cup players, plus thoughts and views from Australia's Assistant World Cup coach Graham Arnold.

To win a copy of this magnificent book all you have to do is answer the three following questions:

A) Which nation, and in what year, won the very first World Cup?

.....

B) Who is Australia's current World Cup captain?

.....

C) Who scored Australia's winning goal last Thursday night at the MCG against the current Euro-champions, Greece?

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Van der Lem to visit Australia!

Highly successful European club and National Asian Experience. What more can Australia ask for?

Australian players, clubs and coaches are very close to rubbing shoulders with highly successful Dutch coach Gerard Van der Lem.

Van der Lem has again stated his admiration for Australia as a sporting nation, and a country that will definitely excel in the world game of football in the not too distant future. Van der Lem has said that he is not too far away from visiting in August/September, if not earlier.

He is a great admirer of Australian players in Europe and our players in Holland, both past and present. Furthermore, his admiration for Australia's sporting culture, mentality, will to win, will to become champions, and the fantastic mental strength that our players have has convinced Van der Lem that a visit to Australia is a must to experience Australian football in person.

"I will visit your beautiful country for sure very soon" Van der Lem stated, albeit some very good offers he has received from European, Asian and South American clubs to continue winning trophies, and adding to his very impressive CV.

Van der Lem's positive and passionate interest in the Australian game and Australia as a sporting nation should definitely be seen as a continued step in the right direction, that the A-League has accomplished along with our Socceroos qualification for Germany 2006.

Van der Lem is a passionate man, who had chosen to stay in the Kingdom (Saudi Arabia) when terrorist attacks were causing many other non-nationals to head home.

And, prior to that, in 2002, Van der Lem suffered a serious a heart scare during the Arab Cup. It was the sort of thing which might have persuaded men of his age to opt for the quiet life but not van der Lem, who left hospital with renewed vigour for his job.

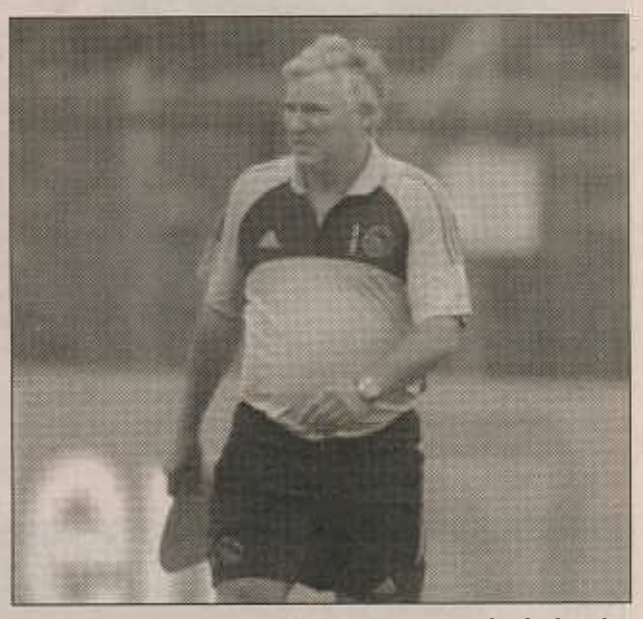
"I want to stay and complete my mission which is to take Saudi Arabia to the World Cup," the Dutchman said soon after the scare. "That would be fantastic"

When Van der Lem, who had enjoyed stints as coach at Ajax and Barcelona, took over in the aftermath of the 2002 World Cup debacle; seasoned football observers in the Kingdom took the appointment as evidence of a sea-change in the attitude of Saudi football administrators.

The Dutchman, charged with trying to restore the nation's footballing fortunes following three defeats in Japan, made it clear to his employers that a break from the past was necessary if Saudi Arabia were to avoid suffering a similar fate in future World Cups.

With qualification for the 2006 World Cup the main focus and with time on his side to get the formula right, van der Lem purged the squad of several 'senior' players and started to pick players from outside the 'big four' of Al Ittihad, Al Hilal, Al Nasr and Al Ahli.

The rewards were instant, with victory in the Arab Cup in late 2002 followed in the second half of 2003 by an undefeated qualifying campaign for the Asian Cup. Then, in January 2004, came victory in the Gulf Cup.



Dutch coach Gerard van der Lem is set to arrive in Aussie shores in August/September

Socceroos face punishing training schedule

Socceroos assistant coach Graham Arnold says the players will endure punishing training sessions ahead of this weekend's friendly against the Netherlands in Rotterdam.

Guus Hiddink is expected to push his Socceroos to the limit on the training track.

The Socceroos, who defeated Greece 1-0 at the MCG on Thursday, will tune up for their opening World Cup match against Japan on June 12 with further friendlies against the Dutch and Liechtenstein.

And Arnold said the side's fitness would again be targeted this week. "We've got a full week together to prepare the side physically and tactically and the players will be punished a little bit again because then going into the Liechtenstein match, after that we've got five days before Japan and then we'll taper off after the Liechtenstein game, but it is all about trying to increase their fitness," he said.

Arnold said all fit members of the squad would be considered for the Dutch friendly.

"I think you'll see our strongest line-up on the field again that's available. We don't have much time to experiment any more because these games are great preparation for the Japan game," he said.

Meanwhile, the Japanese team has arrived in Germany confident of victory in the month-long footballing showcase.

"We came to Germany to win," said Japan's Brazilian coach Zico before his team left for their training base in the western city of Bonn.

Sydney FC to play in Canberra and Wollongong

Sydney FC will take its two "home" games in the 2006 Hyundai A-League Pre Season Cup to Wollongong and Canberra to give football fans in two of the biggest regional centres in New South Wales the opportunity to see first class football.

The defending Hyundai A-League Champions will play its round two Pre Season Cup match against the Newcastle Jets at Canberra Stadium, Canberra on July 22/23 and then travel to WIN Stadium, Wollongong for a clash with Perth Glory on August 5/6.

The exact dates and kick off times will be announced in the near future when scheduling for both venues are confirmed.

"We are delighted to announce that Sydney FC will take its home games to Wollongong and Canberra," said Sydney FC CEO Tim Parker. "Both areas have been very supportive of Sydney FC and we have been knocked out by the cooperation of the football communities and venues in Canberra and Wollongong.

"The Pre Season Cup gives us the chance to expose more people to the A-League and in particular Sydney FC. It is a great chance for football fans in Wollongong and Canberra to come along and watch the number one football team in Australia."

The decision to move the matches is designed to reward the multitude of football fans from regional areas starved of top level football and is in line with the Football Federation of Australia's stance of moving as many Pre Season Cup matches as possible away from traditional home grounds.

SYDNEY FC

Wollongong and Canberra both have thriving football communities and also tasted high level football with teams in the old National Soccer League.

Sydney FC's two "away" matches during the Pre Season Cup will also be in Christchurch, New Zealand (New Zealand Knights) and the Gold Coast (Queensland Roar).

Sydney FC striker Saso Petrovski, who still lives in Wollongong, said the decision to move games to regional areas would be very popular with locals.

"I think the people of Wollongong, and Canberra, will get right behind it," Petrovski said. "I know there are a lot of people in Wollongong who follow Sydney FC and they will be excited that we are playing at WIN Stadium. The same goes for Canberra.

"I can't wait to play for Sydney FC in front of my family and friends at WIN Stadium."

If Sydney FC has home matches in the final two rounds of the Pre Season Cup, those games will be played in Wollongong and Campbelltown, in Sydney's south-western fringe.

The final two rounds of the Pre Season Cup will see four teams qualify for the semi finals and the other four teams to fight it out for places 5th through to 8th.

The semi finals will be played on August 12/13 and if Sydney FC is the home team the game will be at WIN Stadium. The final of the Hyundai A-League Pre Season Cup will take place on the weekend of August 19/20 and if Sydney FC is the host the game will be played at Campbelltown Sports Ground.

Injured Socceroos recovering well

The Socceroos have been boosted by good news on the injury front, with less than two weeks till the World Cup finals in Germany.

Harry Kewell, John Aloisi and Tim Cahill missed the match against Greece last week but assistant coach Graham Arnold says the trio should be fit for the tournament.

"Timmy Cahill is fine," he said.

"[He] trained fully on the last day with the other group that didn't play. He'll be training fully when we get [there].

"Aloisi is probably a day or two after that."

Kewell stayed in England for treatment on a groin injury, but will join the squad soon.

"Harry's coming along quite fine," Arnold said

"We'll have to see that when we get there because he hasn't done anything physically with the team for the five or six days that he missed here, so when we get there we'll know more."

Tim Cahill (right) celebrated with Archie Thompson after the win against Greece at the MCG.

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(see FRONT PAGE Advertisement — World Cup Key-rings).

Johnny Warren's Football Mission

To Be Screened Thursday 15th June @ 8.30pm

"Johnny Warren's Football Mission" is a documentary about Johnny Warren - one of Australia's true sporting heroes.

This film takes you through his playing career, retirement and beyond. Johnny Warren's Football Mission screens on SBS TV, Thursday 15th June @ 8.30pm.

After an entire lifetime dedicated to what he called his "Mission", Johnny Warren became Australia's greatest football diplomat. His mission was simple - to promote the World Game Down Under. By associating himself alongside migrants of all nationalities, he was a true visionary in understanding how football could help bridge the cultural divides that so characterised post-war Australia.

Johnny was one of the few who recognised Football as a universal language that could drag the country firmly into the global community.

"Johnny Warren's Football Mission" is a passionate film about one of Australia's greatest sporting ambassadors. Entertaining, informative and moving, it is a film that depicts Warren's life, from his early days growing up in working class Botany in the south of Sydney where he dared to choose football over rugby league, through to his illustrious 62 cap playing career both at his club St. George and as "Captain Socceroo".

It reveals his devotion and influence on the sport he loved both at home and abroad.

"Johnny Warren's Football Mission" features never before seen footage of classic Socceroo matches, including their first ever attempt to qualify for the 1966 World Cup, the stunning goal that clinched a place at the 1974 World Cup and the heartbreak of defeat at the final hurdle against Iran in 1997, where Johnny famously wept live on national television.

There are also key interviews with Warren's old teammates, family, friends and football journalists, providing insights into our hero's life. We see clips from famous football faces, such as the current Socceroo captain Mark Viduka, and the coach of Brazil's 2006 World Cup team Carlos Alberto Parreira. And testimonials from Pele, Bobby Charlton and Harry Kewell whose appearances pay tribute to the global status Johnny Warren attained throughout his active life.

Former Austrealian World Cup Captain: The late Johnny Warren

Despite a glittering playing career, it was off the field that Johnny Warren had his greatest impact. As Chief Football Analyst on SBS television, his outspoken yet informed opinions won him credibility with the fans but did not always endear him to the often self-interested governing bodies.

Johnny Warren was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2002. Not long before his death FIFA presented Warren with the FIFA Centennial Order of Merit for his services to the game in Australia. His fight against the disease became another "mission" and he fought it with the courage and dignity he displayed on the football pitch. He was the first sportsman to be given a full State funeral as a nation mourned and realised just how much the sport and his country is indebted to its favourite son.

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No room for Vidmar

Guus Hiddink is paid big bucks to make tough decisions.

Few can be tougher than telling Tony Vidmar not to mingle with his former Socceroo teammates too much at the World Cup.

An irregular heart beat that might prove fatal on the field at any time is not a normal circumstance.

It was that cruel discovery that forced Vidmar, 35, to pull out on the brink of the World Cup finals - the dream that had fuelled an 18-year career spanning four World Cup campaigns.

But when so much is at stake there can be no distractions, not even when you are a former Socceroo captain.

"Guus and Arnie (assistant coach Graham Arnold) made a decision," Vidmar said.

"They felt it was in the best interests of the team and myself that I wasn't too much around the team (in Germany).

"I can understand that.

"Of course I'm disappointed, but the focus from (Thursday) night is on the team and the World Cup."

Vidmar, broken-hearted but not broken-spirited, has had a painfully difficult week in Melbourne, catching up with teammates he fully expected to be travelling to Germany with.

"Like everyone else they were in total shock (at the news of his heart problems)," Vidmar said.

"They treat me as one of them, which is nice.

"They tell me I'm still part of the team, which is nice to hear.

"But I've got to deal with it.

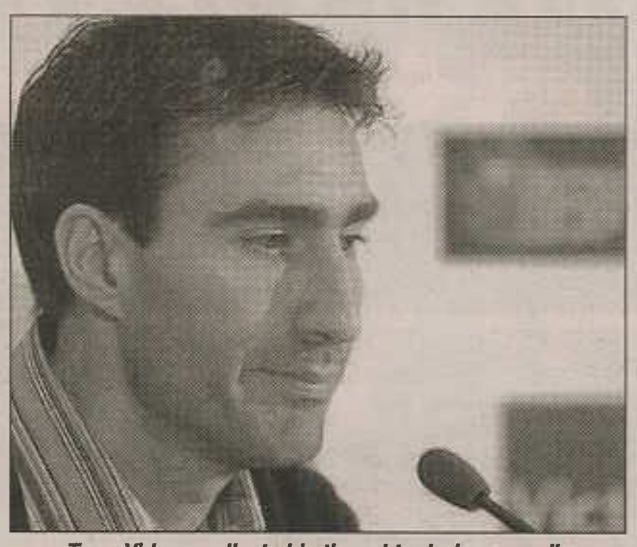
"Six months ago I was on top of the world; now it's been totally turned upside down.

"I have been with the national team for 15 years.

"The national team has been my life.

"But I have a girlfriend and two kids.

"You want to be part of them growing up.



Tony Vidmar collects his thoughts during a media conference in Melbourne

"In the short term this is disappointing, but there's a bigger picture out there for me."

Vidmar believes his problem may have been caused by a freak training accident at his Dutch club Breda last month, when a teammate's head crashed into his chest and left him winded for half a minute.

At a routine FIFA examination the next day he felt short of breath, and tests showed there was a blood clot in his left coronary artery.

"I was kind of playing with my life," he said.

"I was told that if I continued to play football it could be fatal."

Further tests in London and Melbourne confirmed the Dutch diagnosis.

Vidmar will undergo an angioplasty operation in London during the next fortnight.

Doctors plan to insert a stint in the clogged artery to open it up and restore normal blood flow.

Asked if he could play again, Vidmar replied: "They say it's possible, but I turn 36 in July.

"At times you are in denial, but maybe it (appearing at the World Cup finals) wasn't to be."

Vidmar was outstanding in both of last November's qualifiers against Uruguay, and nervelessly slotted home one of the penalties that secured Australia's passage to Germany.

He described it as "payback time" for the devastation of four years earlier, when he trooped off the Estadio Centenario in Montevideo after the Socceroos were dumped 3-0 at the final qualifying hurdle.

"I've got a lot of good memories, and I played a part in us qualifying (this time)," said the Adelaide-born defender, who participated in earlier World Cup campaigns with his brother Aurelio.

"Maybe that's what it was all about - qualifying."

He believes he will put himself through the pain and pleasure of watching the Socceroos in Germany.

"I think I will be there in some capacity," he said, "but I don't know what."

Vidmar managed one laugh when he said he would need to wear a heart monitor while watching Australia's opening match against Japan on June 12.

Otherwise it was a press conference of unbroken sadness.

It ended with the rare sight of journalists giving him a standing ovation.

And he left in tears, just as he did in Montevideo five years ago.

Krncevic puts hand up for Perth Glory job

Eddie Krncevic has openly declared his interest in the Perth Glory coaching job.

Krncevic is currently acting as football advisor to the New Zealand Knights and was recently in Perth checking on local talent.

"I'd love the job and if I did secure it, at least I'd be prepared for it," Krncevic told the West Australian.

Former Rangers, Everton and Tottenham captain Richard Gough has also applied for the position.

Meanwhile, Hiroyuki Ishida has quit Perth Glory after pulling out of his three-year contract this week.

Eugenie Buckley, the Football Federation Australia official acting as Glory project manager until new owners are finalised, told the West Australian Ishida had decided to return to Japan after his loan stint with Malaysian side Johor.

Eddie Krncevic has stated his interest in the vacant Perth Glory coaching position

Ishida, who made 16 appearances and scored once last season, had cited uncertainty at Glory for his decision to leave.

Meanwhile, Perth Glory won't consider any deal with Kaiserslautern for midfielder Simon Colosimo.

Buckley confirmed that Colosimo's agent, Leo Karis, had inquired about handing the player a free transfer.

"We have to go through the proper process. I don't think it's appropriate to say a player can go for free when we don't know anything about (the deal)," Buckley said.

Buckley says the FFA won't make a decision on Colosimo until Kaiserslautern make a formal approach.

Bojic facing visa heartbreak

Aussie Pedj Bojic has a 30% chance of staying in England due to visa problems

Northampton are facing up to the prospect of losing the services of Australian defender Pedj Bojic due to a hitch with his working visa.

The 22-year-old has been offered a new deal to stay on at Sixfields but as he is not an international his chances of being granted a new visa are bleak.

Bojic has made 81 senior appearances for Colin Calderwood's side since joining from Sydney Olympic two years ago, scoring six goals.

"Pedj has got to apply for a working visa," said Cobblers boss Colin Calderwood.

"He doesn't get it under the normal terms, so he's had to go back with his contract offer and go down that road. It is quite a big problem.

"If he doesn't get a visa he can't work here, it's as simple as that.

"He's got the offer of work in this country so now it's down to the immigration department's side of it. From absolutely no chance at the beginning of the year there is now a chance, so the situation has got a little better.

"He's not an international and that's the criteria to improve the football in this country. The fact that he's not a current Australian international makes it very difficult.

"There's about a 30 percent chance we'll keep him.

"It's down to whoever is in charge of giving out the visas, and it's really just in their hands now."

Bench role looms for Kewell

Coach Guus Hiddink is considering using injured star Harry Kewell (pictured left) off the substitutes' bench for Australia's crucial World Cup opener against Japan in Germany next month.

The Liverpool midfielder tore a groin muscle during the Reds' FA Cup final victory over West Ham United earlier this month, which ruled him out of the clash against Greece last week.

Kewell, one of Australia's few genuine world-class players, has remained in England for treatment with Australian and Liverpool club medical staff before linking up with the Socceroos at their training camp in the Netherlands on May 27.

Hiddink said he expected to meet with Kewell after the Australian squad flies into the Netherlands for an eight-day pre-World Cup camp, but he was preparing for contingencies.

"I don't have any doubts about the (unnamed) player who will be his substitute," Hiddink told a press conference here Wednesday.

"I didn't play Harry Kewell in the second play-off game from the start against Uruguay (in Sydney last November) because he was in same condition as he is now and was coming back from an injury.

"So it might be possible that it might be part of the (Japan) game and not from the start.

"It's difficult not having played full games and then coming into another very important game with just two or three full days' training.

"It's a little bit too early to judge now, we'll do that just after the Holland game."

The Australians, preparing for their first World Cup finals' appearance in 32 years in Germany next month, take on the Dutch in Rotterdam on June 4 before a final warm-up match with Liechtenstein in Ulm, Germany, on June 7.

Australia take on Zico's Japan in Kaiserslautern on June 12, in a match vital to both teams' chances of progressing to the second round in the same group as five-times World Cup champions Brazil and 1998 World Cup semi-finalists Croatia.

Victory honours Viduka

Melbourne Victory CEO, Geoff Miles, presented Socceroos captain Mark Viduka his own Victory shirt prior to Australia's much anticipated friendly against Greece at the MCG last week.

The Australian and Middlesbrough striker is the international ambassador of the Melbourne Victory, and Miles passed on best wishes along with his thoughts on the Australian squad.

"We congratulate Mark on the fantastic honour of leading his country, and wish him, Archie and the team all the best for a successful World Cup campaign," he said.

"It's great to see the strong Victorian presence in our national team and it was a big thrill for two of our players, Kristian Sarkies and Adrian Leijer, to be invited to join the squad for last week's lead up to the game against Greece."

Viduka praised the football public in Victoria for the way they embraced the team in the inaugural A-League season, and urged fans to sign up for the upcoming year.

"It's been great to see the Victorian public get right behind Melbourne Victory in their first season," Viduka said.

"I'm sure Archie, Kevin (Muscat) and the boys will have a great season and I urge all Victory supporters to sign up as members."

Both players got huge receptions when they took on the Greeks in their final 1-0 victory at the MCG last week.

Archie Thompson, Mark Viduka and Geoff Miles

dressing sheds

by Mark Stavroulakis

Socceroos settle into Dutch camp

The Socceroos have settled into their pre-World Cup camp in the Netherlands where they are training ahead of this weekend's practice match against the Dutch in Rotterdam.
Injured Liverpool star Harry Kewell has joined the squad and is expected to resume full training later this week.
Assistant coach Johan Neeskens says he and coach Guus Hiddink will be concentrating on fine-tuning and fitness work in the wake of the 1-0 win over Greece in Melbourne last week.
"I think we have enough time to get fitter and work out some things that can be better but this team is capable of doing that, they have shown that in the past and we are very confident," he said.
Neeskens said the huge crowd which cheered the Socceroos at the MCG would have given the side a taste of what to expect next month in Germany.
"That was exceptional for a friendly game - 95,000 is something unbelievable, I never saw that before," he said.
"They played at home against Uruguay and there were 80,000 and the way the people cheered, well that is what they can expect every game here in Germany."

Best of friends: Greece's Giourkas Seitaridis (left) exchanges jerseys with Australia's Stan Lazaridis

Greeks enjoy their holiday

What a memorable week it was for the thousands of Greek fans who witnessed their Euro Champs in action against the Socceroos at the MCG.
The likes of Stelios Giannakopoulos, Angelos Charisteas, Georgios Samaras and a number of other Greek stars made the trek from Europe but were their minds set on the friendly clash was the big question everyone was asking?
Many Greek fans felt angered and upset that the Greeks took it too easy against the Australians and showed up with a poor display.
The Greek side spent a week riding on huge festivities set out by the local community in Melbourne but close sources have stated that maybe the side were "too partied" out for the match against the Roos last Thursday.

Greek fans upset

A number of Greek fans were left frustrated and upset after the 1-0 loss to the Socceroos last week but not just on the result itself.
At the conclusion of the match, only 3 players in Samaras, Giannakopoulos and Nikopolidis acknowledged the huge Greek crowd on hand while the rest walked off at full-time.

Hiddink to give Covic a go

Guus Hiddink will continue to experiment his goalkeepers by stating that he will give third string shotstopper Ante Covic a run in either the Netherlands or Liechtenstein match.
Hiddink gave Zeljko Kalac the green light against the Greeks and although he was not called upon many times, a few timely errors via dropped balls worked against 'Spider'.
Close sources have stated that Mark Schwarzer is expected to start against Japan but Covic could well be the dark horse under the Hiddink regime.

State of Origin?

It seems as though the Socceroos popularity has put a major dent in the current State of Origin Rugby League series between NSW and Queensland.
Sydney's Telstra Stadium still had a number of tickets up for grabs and with the League series usually a packed house, it was a shade of what it was a few years back.
The sleeping giant of sport in Australia known as our very own football seems to have cut crowds for not just League, but AFL and also Rugby Union.

Kewell links up with Socceroos

Injured Socceroos striker Harry Kewell has joined up with his teammates at their training camp in the Netherlands, confident he will be fit for the start of next month's World Cup finals in Germany.
Kewell missed Australia's 1-0 win over European champions Greece in Melbourne on Thursday to remain in England for treatment on his injured groin.
The Liverpool striker will also miss this week's friendly against Holland and possibly the final warm-up against Liechtenstein, but expects to be ready for Australia's opening World Cup Group F match against Japan on June 12.
"The injury is not ideal but I am expecting to be back and ready in time for the tournament," Kewell said.
"I'm so disappointed that I couldn't get back to Melbourne for the game against Greece but it was out of my control.
"I now have to focus on what is within my control, and that's working hard."
Australia play defending champions Brazil in their second pool match before tackling Croatia in what is looming as one of the toughest groups of the tournament.
"People might say that the Brazil game is the biggest but this is a World Cup where all three group games are important," Kewell said.
"To me, Japan and Croatia are just as big. We need to win, or at least not lose.
"It's great being in a group where all the matches have something at stake and where each team, if they have a good day, can win.
"Our first aim is to beat Japan, then a result against Brazil would be good, and then beat Croatia."

Kim Beazley praises Socceroos

Federal Opposition Leader Kim Beazley has sent his best wishes to the World Cup-bound Socceroos.
"I was delighted to attend the Socceroos game and to see the great skill with which we approach our punt for the World Cup," Mr Beazley told reporters.
"I believe they will do us proud.
"The Greek game was an example of how well they're going to do in the very formidable competition that they find themselves in."

Vieri keen on U.S. move

Amidst reports that Christian Vieri was linked to a possible move to A-League side Sydney FC has come the news that the former Italian striker has hinted his desire to play in the Major Soccer League in the U.S.
With his own fashion label being promoted in the United States, that is part of the reason why Vieri would like to play in the MLS.
In what would be an exciting coup for the Australian game, it's unlikely that the former Fairfield man will link up with the Blues especially considering the fact that Sydney lost up to $3million during its debut season.

Gough interested in Glory

Former Scotland and Rangers defender Richard Gough has confirmed he is interested in the vacant coaching position at A-League club Perth Glory.
Gough, who currently resides in San Diego, is a close friend of Glory technical manager Mich d'Avray, having grown up together in South Africa.
And the former Rangers, Scotland and Everton captain said after a conversation with his childhood friend, he had decided to throw his hat into the ring.
"I made a phone call to (Mich) ... I spoke to him three or four days ago, and maybe he mentioned it to someone, you know how football rumours go on," Gough told Southern Cross Radio in Perth.
"I said to Mich ... it would be something that would interest me, so I sent my CV to the gentleman in Sydney who asked for it, and they were going to hand it on to the Australian federation."

Griffiths to reject Jets

Leeds United striker Joel Griffiths is expected to reject an offer from Newcastle Jets.
Sources close to Griffiths indicate the former Neuchatel Xamax forward is determined to play on in England after fighting for so long to break into the UK.
Socceroo Mile Sterjovski's name has been hinted as a possible target for the Jets squad.

Butcher seeks Motherwell partnership

Sydney FC boss Terry Butcher hopes to continue to help old club Motherwell by establishing a partnership between the two teams.
"The dream of everyone connected with the club is to build a proper infrastructure and I'd love to send some young lads over to Motherwell to give them experience," he said.
"From what I've seen already, there are definitely quite a few players who would be good enough to do a job in the SPL."

State League contracts toughen up

State league competitions from across Australia have toughened up on its contracts on letting players go for the A-League season.
Its believed that players who have already won themselves deals in next year's A-League will need to play out their entire seasons with their respective club before jumping ship to the elite competition.
Close sources to ABSW have stated that there were too many issues last year involving a number of players who's unhappy state league clubs felt the pressure of losing them to A-League sides during their season.

Short and Sweet

Giraldi set for Adelaide

Adelaide United are set to close the signing of youngsters Dez Giraldi and Jason Spagnuolo.
The Advertiser says Giraldi, 20, is waiting to be released by Empoli on a possible one-year loan deal as a United under-20 squad member.
The 185cm striker has been training with the Reds squad for the past two weeks while Spagnuolo, 21, earned his stripes after an impressive short-term loan stint last season.
Meanwhile, Perth Glory veteran Bobby Despotovski could be playing in Adelaide this season with the striker in talks with White City.

World Sport Group rethinks Perth Glory bid

World Sport Group are rethinking their bid for Perth Glory's A-League licence.
WSG president Seamus O'Brien admits there are concerns over going into a loss-making venture for the media giants.
"At the end of the day, you are evaluating taking a loss-making venture off their hands," O'Brien told the West Australian.
"We are now just considering whether we want to do that. You've got to look at it in a calm and rational way."
He said WSG, which has close ties with the Asian Football Confederation and helped develop the Asian Champions League, had been informed only last week that it would have to follow an application process, but felt the company already had a "reasonable grip" on what was required.
"We are not going into this blind. We want to lift up every stone and see what crawls out," O'Brien said. "But the time barrier is one of the big disadvantages to the whole process."
Along with WSG, a rival local consortium, headed by Tom Galopoulos and Argentine legend Gabriel Batistuta, is also in the frame for Glory's licence.

Sermanni delighted

Matildas coach Tom Sermanni was full of praise for his squad's tough 2-1 victory over Mexico at the MCG last week stating that this was a terrific result for the squad.
"Yeh, it's always good to win. I am delighted, particularly in the second half, with the way they came back.
"I thought we started a little bit sluggish in the first half and Mexico made life difficult for us by playing deep and playing lots of players behind the ball.
"They also had some good-skilful players to hit us on the break.
"That was a good experience for us to play teams that play like that. I think the second half we stepped up a level and came back into the game and it was good to come back from behind and win," he added.

Neeskens wants Australia job

Johan Neeskens has declared he wants to continue with Australia after the World Cup.
The former NEC Nijmegan coach joined coach Guus Hiddink's staff last year and chose to turn down an offer to follow him to Russia after the World Cup to stay free for Australia. Neeskens told the Daily Telegraph: "I'm very pleased to work with this Australian team. "Graham Arnold did a good job in Bahrain and I also spent nine days with the Olympic team in Vietnam.
"I have no future commitments and I would like to continue with Australia. If they want me, I want them but it's not up to me, it's up to the board."

Jones sticks with Australia

Middlesbrough goalkeeper Brad Jones has pledged his future to Australia, despite being snubbed for next month's World Cup.
The Perth-born goalkeeper said he had no intention of turning his back on Australia and revealed that as a 17-year-old he rejected an opportunity to play for an England youth team against Luxembourg because he felt so strongly about the country of his birth.
"I'd already made that decision (about wanting to play for Australia) and I'm not going to change my mind," Jones, who is in Perth on a holiday, told the West Australian.
"By next year, I will hold passports for three countries (Australia, England and France) but I'm Australian.
"Having not been in any of the camps I didn't expect to be picked.
"But it was disappointing not being given a chance to even train in front of him."

Adelaide Utd won't rush marquee signing

Adelaide United coach John Kosmina isn't panicking over his squad building for next season.
Kosmina won't rush into a decision over a replacement for last season's marquee player Shenquing Qu.
"You can dive in, you can panic," Kosmina told The Advertiser.
"We're probably the most stable club in the competition and I think people lose sight of just how important that is.
"Teams and clubs in particular need stability and we've got that on and off the field.
"A lot of other clubs dumped a lot of players, we didn't.
"I'm really happy with the balance of the squad at the moment.
"I thought about where we needed to strengthen and hopefully what will come out on August 25 when we kick off the season will be enough to get us that step further."
Kossie added: "I'm in no hurry at the moment (to sign a marquee player), we've got a bit of time up our sleeves.
"We have to have a good look around rather than rush in.
"We need a striker, that's the biggest thing that we want.
"But having said that, I'm pretty much prepared to certainly go into the cup competition a man short."

Aussie Spy in Holland

Even though he just missed out on a place in the World Cup Socceroos squad, striker Brett Holman has still managed to get himself a gig with the side.
A Dutch media outlet has given Holman the role of giving its readers and viewers the latest news on the Socceroos camp whilst their time in the Netherlands.

McGrath not homesick

Contrary to what 'The Couch' said in last week's ABSW about promising 14-year old Brent McGrath being homesick during his trials in Denmark with Brondby, close sources to the "Shed" stated that it was the total opposite.
McGrath enjoyed his time in Denmark and the experience also which could well see the Westfields Sports High student hitting a specific European club in the not too distant future.
McGrath is currently playing his football with NSW Winter Super League outfit Sydney Wanderers

Roar keen on Reddy

Queensland Roar confirmed that they have received a proposal from the Newcastle Jets regarding unsettled goalkeeper Liam Reddy.

Reports in yesterdays *Daily Telegraph* suggested that Reddy would be on his way to Queensland Roar in a swap deal with current keeper Tom Willis, but Coach Miron Bleiberg poured cold water on the idea.

"We read about this speculation in the newspaper then we received a phone call and an offer from Newcastle Jets regarding Liam Reddy and Tom Willis, but Tom has indicated to us that he wishes to stay at the club.

"He (Willis) has a contract and with us and we have every intention of honouring his arrangement with the club. We will not accept a swap deal because we want to be professional and loyal to our players. That is our position," Bleiberg said.

Reddy was on the cards of leaving the Jets for quite some time now ever since the club appointed Nick Theos as it's new manager for the season.

Both Reddy and Theos had a fall-out during their time at Parramatta Power thus prompting speculation that he was set to leave the club as soon as possible.

Reddy had a sterling season with the Jets last year and was rated as one of the best of the year.

If Reddy parts, the Jets have said that they will look to sign current Oldham keeper Les Pogliacomi, who was also a former Wollongong Wolves player under Theos at the time.

Meanwhile Bleiberg admits he doesn't know if Patrick Suffo will accept terms.

Roar have been waiting on an answer from the Cameroon international striker for a month and Bleiberg told the club's website: "We're not waiting - if we get surprised that's good but if not we'll keep marching on. We are now looking at an experienced Brazilian striker and also a Uruguayan who is currently playing for a prominent club in Uruguay's top division."

He added: "If it goes ahead, the Brazilian will be flown in but the Uruguayan is still playing so he cannot come for a trial, however his club breaks for the World Cup in the first week of June.

"There are another three rounds to go, so if I go to Brazil I'll try to catch the last few of those games over there."

Liam Reddy: On his way to the Queensland Roar?

Bleiberg also confirmed that he will more than likely start the season with a 19 man squad.

"We will probably still start with 19. That way if we find weaknesses in certain positions we can use the transfer window and try to fix them up. The vacant spots will be for local Australian players," he said.

Farina's brush with Beckham

Former coach Frank Farina knew Australia were on the brink of a new era when he heard Real Madrid star David Beckham swearing!

At half-time of Australia's shock win in England three years ago, Farina was almost bowled over by a furious Becks as he charged towards the home dressing room.

"I'm walking up the tunnel and Beckham rushes past me and says to (England goalkeeping coach) Ray Clemence:

'We're fing going back out there. I don't care'," Farina recalled to the *Daily Telegraph*.**

"It was beautiful to hear."

Farina added: "It was the first game for us after losing the World Cup qualifying series in 2001 (against Uruguay) and it was a crucial time.

"I won't beat around the bush, we were struggling. Where we were, to get a game against England was just massive in itself."

Motherwell boss: McDonald won't go cheaply

Motherwell boss Maurice Malpas expects striker Scott McDonald to start the season at Fir Park.

The Aussie handed in his transfer request last week and Malpas told *BBC Sport*: "We expect Scott to be playing next season.

"If he performs then bids may come in, but he will not go cheaply.

"Motherwell have put a lot of hard work into him and we think it is fair that he gives something back to the club."

Malpas has not been able to contact McDonald, who is holidaying in Australia.

McDonald, who has been at Fir Park for two-and-a-half years, is best known for the two late goals that dramatically denied Celtic the 2004/05 league title.

"Scott feels he needs to push up a couple of notches in terms of challenging himself," the player's agent, Lou Sticca, told BBC Sport.

Aussie striker Scott McDonald wants out of Motherwell

"There has been continuous interest in Scott over the past 12 months and Scotland and England are his targets.

"He is adamant that he wants to leave and he made his mind up five or six weeks ago.

"It's purely a professional matter and has nothing to do with Terry (Butcher) leaving or Maurice taking over."

Butcher agreed a move to Sydney FC last week but McDonald, who failed to make his country's World Cup squad, is not looking for a return to his homeland.

Back in hometown Melbourne, McDonald had his agent make his transfer request last week to Well chief Stewart Robertson.

McDonald told tribalfootball.com: "I have absolutely loved the last two and a half years at Motherwell. Terry Butcher and Maurice Malpas have helped me enormously to get my career back on track."

HAPPY TO BE HOME

By Michelle Fowler

Andrew Packer is home – where the sun shines, the climate is perfect and his new team reigns and it's all long overdue according to the experienced midfield utility.

"I've definitely been around but this is fantastic – I've been waiting a long time for this.

"I think I'll fit in well, as I've played here before in the state league and know quite a few of the guys through other teams, so I'm happy to be back."

Andrew Packer was delighted with his move to the Sunshine Coast

Queensland Roar's new recruit believes that the revamped squad will make a significant impact in the upcoming Hyundai A-League season after just missing out on the finals last time around.

"We can win definitely.

"The club has improved the squad from last season and really they were only one game short of being in the finals – this season will be bigger and better.

"They were timing their run well and had the season been a few games longer they would have gotten into the finals and done very well."

The first game in the Hyundai A-League Pre-Season Cup sees Queensland Roar take on last years champions Sydney FC on the Gold Coast and Packer is keen to face-off with his former club.

"I think it's great, it'll be a good test for us straight away.

"It also gives me an opportunity to see the guys and have a match against them but there will be no animosity because we left on such great terms and also shared winning the grand final together."

But while Packer believes it will be a nail-biter, he promises Queensland fans that they will be the ones singing afterwards at the pub.

"It will be a Queensland win for sure, a slight win, but that's all you need."

Lazaridis makes Perth Glory first-choice

Stan Lazaridis is believed to be joining Perth Glory

Stan Lazaridis' first-choice is Perth Glory as he prepares to return to Australian football.

The released Birmingham City winger's business manager, Paul Tombides, told the *Australian*: "I'm also in talks with Sydney FC this week, but Stan's preference at this stage is to sign with Perth.

"He began his playing career in the WA League with Kingsway Olympic and is without doubt the West's greatest export.

"Western Australia has produced the likes of Shaun Murphy, Chris Coyne, Richard Garcia and Brad Jones, but Stan has without doubt been the best."

Lazaridis riddled out a move to Adelaide United where many pundits thought he was set to move to.

The Newcastle United Jets are also said to be out of the race in signing the Socceroo.

Aloisi reveals Adelaide Utd talks

John Aloisi has been linked with a move to Adelaide United

Alaves striker John Aloisi has revealed he's set for talks with Adelaide United.

Aloisi has a year left on his Alaves contract, but is reluctant to play in the Segunda Liga next season.

In Melbourne for Australia's World Cup preparations, Aloisi told *The Advertiser*: "There's a few things floating around.

"I know Kossie (Adelaide United coach John Kosmina) wants to have a word to me this week.

"I'm not too sure what he wants to say or tell me. I really don't know myself what I want to do. Who knows what's around the corner?"

It will be a fitting time if Aloisi agrees to the Reds as it will give him the chance to play alongside his brother and skipper of the club Ross.

Socceroo great Ray Richards believes in Aussie glory

By Joe Russo

Ray Richards is a Socceroo great and a player who would have made the national team in virtually any era. Recently in Sydney Richards, and most of his former teammates from the 1974 Socceroos, Australia's first team to qualify for a World Cup, got together to launch the biography of their former coach Rale Rasic.

The team was generously sponsored by corporate giant Gillette and Richards discussed that event, the '74 Socceroos and the current Socceroos, in an extensive interview with the Sunday Night Soccer radio program.

"Gillette came to the fore some time ago," he said. "Rale [Rasic] was talking with them and they really came good and got the boys together.

"It's the first time that we really had the majority of the boys together. The NSW boys get together quite often and some of the Melbourne boys come through to our reunions, but this time we had pretty well everybody.

"There were only a couple of absentees this time, including the two players that we've lost [the late Jimmy Mackay and the late Johnny Warren]."

"I wouldn't swap my time for anything. The group of players we had and still have are a family.

"We bonded when we went to Vietnam at the height of the war and we played in Saigon and there was a riot; we bonded when we went into Korea when there was a curfew; and we bonded when we went into the Philippines when there was curfew.

"These different things really brought us together and held us together as a group. This current squad is man for man a better team, but I still believe that '74 will always be our best team – not as far as performance goes but as far as overall mateship."

With the 2006 World Cup just around the corner it will be a special time for Richards and his fellow Socceroos of 1974 because they too qualified for a World Cup in Germany. Ironically, it's the same country that will host the Socceroos on the world stage for the second time in our history.

"It's fabulous for the game here and it's fabulous for the country as a whole because there is no bigger sporting event in the world," Richards proudly told listeners.

"You can put the Olympic Games, the Commonwealth Games and the whole box and dice into one box, and it still wouldn't measure up to the soccer World Cup."

Inevitably Richards is regularly asked his opinion on the 2006 Socceroos and to make some sort of comparison between his team of 32 years ago and the current Socceroos.

"This team is a fully professional side and by that I mean the actual time involved," the former Marconi star said. "Having said that, I don't think that this team is any more professional than we were and I always say that professionalism doesn't come with money. Professionalism comes with attitude.

"We were part timers in '74. We were 9 to 5 workers who then became soccer players from 6pm onwards.

"For these boys it's their bread and butter and I believe that we can hold our own this time around. I'd be very surprised, not disappointed because I know how big their task is, if we didn't move on to the second round this time.

"If you take into consideration that when we went in '74 we went as one team in a total of 16; this time we're going as one in 32. So for these boys to basically get through to the second round is basically where we were at in 1974."

> "I don't think that this team is any more professional than we were and I always say that professionalism doesn't come with money. Professionalism comes with attitude."
>
> *– Ray Richards*

Australia's major obstacle in the Group phase is arguably Brazil and many pundits have already dismissed Australia's chances in this game. However, this is not the case for Richards.

"I have high hopes for them," he said. "I know it might sound silly, but I would have liked to have faced Brazil in the first match because they are the type of team that, if they get on a roll, they are very hard to stop.

"I think the best time to get Brazil is as early as you can in the tournament. I know we are getting them in the second round, but it's still one game more than I would have liked."

Richards was asked about the magnitude of playing in a World Cup from a player's perspective and to highlight to listeners what the Socceroos will face.

"I don't think they will really grasp the magnitude of the task and the event until they step out onto the grass in Germany," he said. "When they stand there and they play the national anthem it will bring back November to them, that fabulous night that everybody saw here in Sydney when we got through against Uruguay."

Over the years Richards has been involved in some verbal sparring through the media with Harry Kewell. In recent times, however, it appears that those days are part of the distant past as the entire nation gets behind Kewell & co in Germany.

"Harry always said that he would much prefer to win a medal with Liverpool rather than represent Australia in the World Cup, but I think he'll appreciate just how great a feeling it is and I think he's come to realise that now," the always straightforward Richards told listeners.

"Harry was only on for half a game [in the FA Cup final] and his contribution wasn't that substantial but, by the same token, you don't know what task he was asked to do.

"It's easy to be an armchair critic and say 'he should have done this' or 'he should have done that'. I am not privy to any tactical instructions given to him, but I was disappointed with Harry in the FA Cup final.

"I think he's a fabulous player, but my query in the past has always been with his commitment to the Green and Gold and not his ability."

Australia's first match against Japan, quarterfinalists in the 2002 World Cup, will be no easy encounter. Richards was asked his opinion on Australia's first match.

"I believe we have the physical strength to overcome Japan, but then you look back at the last World Cup with them and Korea and see what a revelation they were.

"One only has to hope that they have not moved too far forward since the last World Cup because if they have, then we are going to have our work cut out.

"I still believe that with Guus [Hiddink] at the helm, and with his knowledge and his understanding, we are in with a very big chance against Japan.

"We must get maximum points and a solid victory against Japan to really put us in the right frame of mind for the next big one against Brazil."

And what does he think about the 23 man squad that Australia has selected? Some eyebrows were raised by the surprise inclusions of Joshua Kennedy and Mark Milligan, but Richards believes that assistant Australia coach Graham Arnold may have been very influential in the selections of some of the fringe players.

"We all expected that Guus would stick by what he's had and maybe bring in a couple of fringe players. However, I don't think that Guus has had a lot to do with these couple of bolter selections because I don't believe he would have seen that much of them."

He also took the chance to acknowledge the personal tragedy of a heart condition which has ruled out one of the great warriors of our national team Tony Vidmar.

"You can only feel for Tony [Vidmar] after all these years," Richards said. "I think everybody remembers Tony's face after the Uruguay game in Montevideo in 2001. Tony was devastated.

"To finally reach that goal and then have that dream taken away from you, is just devastating and one can only really feel for him."

The final question posed to Richards was whether or not he believed that Graham Arnold was the logical successor to take over from Hiddink after the World Cup? Somewhat surprisingly he believed that Bora Milutinovic, who coached Mexico (86), Costa Rica (90), USA (94), Nigeria (98) and China (02), five different nations to five consecutive World Cups, should be the man appointed to take over the reigns of the national team.

"I think we should look overseas," he clearly stated. "I have no bones with Arnie, but I'm of the belief that when you're somebody's assistant you make a pact.

"I think Frank Farina made a pact that if they didn't get through to the World Cup then they [Farina and Arnold] would move on. They didn't make the World Cup in 2001 and they didn't move on – neither of them.

"When Frank got the chop last year, I believe that Arnie should have gone with him and, no, I don't believe that Arnie is the man to take over the national team.

"I would like to see us get Bora Milutinovic; I think he's a fabulous coach and mentor," he concluded.

Sunday Night Soccer is on radio 98.5 FM in Sydney every Sunday at 10.00pm.

Ray Richards was part of the first ever Socceroos side to have qualified for a World Cup in Germany way back in 1974

Knights sign winger Buari

New Zealand Knights have confirmed the signing of former Fulham player Malik Buari.

Buari, 22, was born in Accra, Ghana, and made three appearances in the English Premier League with Fulham before leaving the club in May 2005 due to injury.

New Zealand Knights' new recruit Malik Buari

Since then the versatile Buari has had a spell with Conference sjde Woking on non-contract terms, and Knights football manager Paul Nevin says he expects the player to prove a hit in the A-League.

"Malik is a very athletic player, one who can do a job virtually anywhere on the park for me. He prefers wide right or left and can play up front but will fit in according to our needs at any given time," Nevin told the club's official website.

"Thankfully for us he has grasped this opportunity to play in the A-League before returning to the English football league, where I'm sure he is more than capable of playing again."

Melbourne bids for Homeless World Cup

Melbourne will bid to host the annual 'street soccer' Homeless World Cup in 2008, it was announced.

The Victorian State Government has formed a partnership with The Big Issue magazine and will bid against Switzerland, England and Italy for the tournament.

The event is organised internationally by The Big Issue and attracts teams of homeless and disadvantaged players from all over the world.

Minister for Communities John Thwaites says Melbourne's street soccer program will also be expanded to encourage homeless people in Melbourne to take up the sport.

"We are funding an expansion of that into regional areas like Ballarat, Geelong and Shepparton, and also funding national street soccer tournaments so we can choose the representatives for Australia for the Homeless World Cup," he said.

This year's tournament is being held in Cape Town, South Africa at the end of September.

Last year's event in Edinburgh, Scotland, attracted more than 20 teams and was won by Italy, with Australia seventh.

Skoko sings midfield's praises

Socceroo Josip Skoko says Australia's midfield is the best it has ever been in the lead-up to next month's World Cup finals in Germany.

Skoko said the Socceroos' midfield was world class.

"I think we've got a lot more depth and variety," he pointed out.

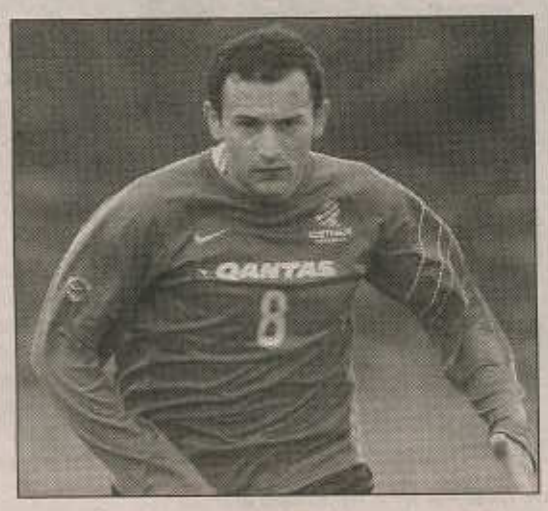
"The midfielders we've got now are more modern and they've got a lot more run in them and I think the skill level's definitely higher so I think the quality's much higher."

Meanwhile, veteran Socceroos defender Tony Popovic said he was confident of keeping his place in Australia's starting line-up in Germany.

But he echoed former captain and fellow defender Craig Moore in admitting that the competition for places in the starting side was intense.

"It's normal isn't it? That happens at our club so that happens, obviously, at international level," he said.

"You've got the best 23 players available for your country so everyone's fighting for a spot. It's all friendly rivalry though."



Josip Skoko believes Australia's midfield is in the best shape ever

New Victory stars: Fred (left) and Claudinho (right) arrive in Melbourne.

Brazilians join the hottest game in town

Melbourne Victory's new Brazilian imports have kick started their campaign in the A-League after spending a solid week at training with its new members.

26 year old Fred and 24 year old Claudinho were delayed in Sydney by customs officials and landed in Melbourne an hour an a half after their scheduled arrival. However, this did not deter the hardy supporters who made the trek to Tullamarine Airport to catch a first glimpse of their new heroes.

The players were accompanied by their agent Marcio Bitencourt and former South Melbourne player Steve Panopoulos, who now calls Brazil home.

Bitencourt, acting as a translator for the players, spoke of their enthusiasm at joining Melbourne Victory.

"Both players are very excited to be here," Bitencourt said upon arrival at Tullamarine.

"The largest newspaper in Brazil wrote a feature about the boys coming to Australia before they left, so there is a lot of interest in the league and in Melbourne Victory.

"It's been a long flight for all of us. For Claudinho, he left home on Thursday morning at 9am and had to travel by bus for 7 hours and get connecting flights as well, so for him it's been even longer."

Despite the arduous journey, Victory coach Ernie Merrick expects the players to arrive for their first training session at Todd Road tomorrow.

On hand to welcome the players were Merrick and Football Operations Manager Gary Cole, Victory Director Anthony Di Pietro and new club CEO Geoff Miles.

Miles was delighted not just with the arrival of the players but also with the turnout of supporters at the airport.

"I'm delighted to welcome Fred and Claudinho to Melbourne Victory," he said. "It's also terrific to see so many passionate fans provide such an enthusiastic welcome at Tullamarine for the players' arrival.

"The players certainly looked overwhelmed by the response. I think it was totally unexpected for them.

"Their credentials as players in Brazil are outstanding and we look forward to the contribution they will make to our team this season.

"On the back of Archie returning to play with us, the support up front from Fred and Claudinho augurs well for an exciting season at Melbourne Victory."

Miles took the opportunity of the Brazilians' arrival to announce the launch of Melbourne Victory's 2006/07 membership packages. The membership theme this season is "it's the hottest game in town", a slogan which looks even more relevant with the arrival of Fred and Claudinho.

"The arrival of our Brazilian recruits and the return of Archie Thompson coincide with the launch of our membership packages for the upcoming season," Miles said. "We're sure our fans will continue their great support of the club at the hottest game in town."

CHIPPERFIELD EYES A-LEAGUE

World Cup-bound midfielder Scott Chipperfield has revealed his desire to return to the Hyundai A-League after his current deal with Basel expires in two years time.

Chipperfield, currently 30, believes he will still have plenty to offer at 32, and says he would like to give something back to Australian football by returning to the fledgling domestic league.

"I've got two more years with Basel, I'm happy there and enjoy my football there but I'll be 32 when that finishes, so maybe I'll get one or two years in the A-League," he said.

"You've got players 34, 35, still playing strong, we'll see how things go."

One of the key objectives of the competition at its inception was to attract Australian players back towards the end their careers.

The return of a player of Chipperfield's quality would be a big feather in the cap for the national league, and he could be the first of many of the overseas-based stars in the World Cup squad of 2006 to return.

Scott Chipperfield will return to play in the A-League in two years time after his contract expires at Basel

We'd die for Guus, says Viduka

Newly-installed Socceroos captain Mark Viduka says loyalty to coach Guus Hiddink will inspire players to "die for the team" at the World Cup in Germany.

"I look at football management in two parts. The first is man-management and the second is the on-the-field stuff, like tactics," Viduka said.

"When it comes to man-management, I've never dealt with a person who has the type of ability to be able to get every single player, even those on the bench, to be 100 per cent willing to go out and die for the team."

Viduka's elevation to the captaincy was one of Hiddink's first moves in his campaign to break an Australian World Cup drought dating back to 1974.

Now that the Socceroos are going to Germany, Hiddink is hoping they can make an impact before he heads off to take up a lucrative two-year contract to revive Russia's international fortunes.

The Socceroos are grouped with defending champions Brazil, Japan and Croatia but the Dutchman plans to adopt a possession-based strategy and take the game to the opposition.

Socceroos skipper Mark Viduka strikes a pose in Melbourne

"This is not a team to lean back and rely on just one or two counter-attacks each half," Hiddink has explained.

Hiddink believes the first group match against Asian rivals Japan in Kaiserslautern on June 12 looms as the most crucial.

"In the Japan game Australia will go for the win, but we must not lose the game," he said.

"That does not mean you must always think defensively. If you can go for a win against Japan you are half way (to qualifying for the second round)."

Hiddink is also not ruling out upsetting five-time champions and tournament favourites Brazil.

"When you have the spirit of this Australian team on the pitch you might have a chance to win," he said.

"They never give up. They go for 90 minutes at high pace. It's very important to go for 90 minutes with a huge mental force.

"It's quite an achievement already to be in the World Cup. But I know the Australian guys are not happy just by reaching the World Cup. I think this team can surprise, but I cannot predict where it will go."

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BRISBANE PremierLeague

TARINGA MAUL PALM BEACH

As Pine Rivers keep Brisbane City at bay

By Glenn Davis

Taringa Rovers scored one of the biggest upsets of the season to move into third place on the Brisbane Premier League ladder with a 4-nil thrashing of last year's premiers Palm Beach at Mallawa Drive on Saturday night.

Taringa is now on 21 points equal points with Palm Beach but with a slightly superior goal advantage.

In other matches Pine Rivers stayed second with a 1-nil win over Brisbane City, Brisbane Wolves toughed out a 3-2 win over Easts while Brisbane Strikers stayed at the top of the table with a 3-nil win over Mt. Gravatt.

Toowoomba is still one of the favourites for relegation but eased some of its pressure with an upset 3-1 win over Rochedale while Mitchelton got back into winning form with a 1-nil win against Souths.

At the Gold Coast, Taringa opened the scoring after 13 minutes when Steve Unsworth caught Palm Beach's defence square at the back before neatly chipping the keeper for a 1-nil lead.

Taringa then extended its lead to 2-nil just before the interval after Andrew Imrie slotted home when he pounced on a loose ball following some good lead-up work from defender Daniel Dreger.

Unsworth again caught the home side square at the back and once again lofted a shot over the keeper for a 3-nil lead in the 55th minute while Reza Aysen got the final touch for a 4-nil lead when he followed up a shot from Alex Davani.

Palm Beach had midfielder Shane Robinson sent off late in the second but the dismissal made little difference to the outcome as the visitors led 3-nil at the time.

Triumphant Taringa coach Alan Waller praised his side for a great team performance after the victory and was reluctant to single out any player for special mention.

"They had a player sent off with 25 minutes to go but we had the game well and truly won by then," Waller said.

"We went into the game with a specific plan and it worked. It was a really good team effort and everyone did their job.

"I couldn't single out any player but I watched their previous game and noticed their keeper was off his line a lot so I mentioned it to Steve Unsworth and asked him to test his luck with some long shots and it worked."

Palm Beach coach Keith Garland had no excuses for his side's lack luster performance.

"We had a few players out but there were no excuses and we were beaten by a far better side," Garland said.

Taringa started the season with an aim of winning the premiership and Waller is happy to be within five points of leaders Brisbane Strikers at the halfway mark of the season.

At the half way mark of the season, Brisbane Strikers hold a comfortable lead at the top of the table following a comprehensive 3-nil win over Mt. Gravatt at Perry Park.

Coach Bobby Hamilton couldn't be happier with only one loss in the first round and is on target to give the Strikers' its first premiership in the local competition.

The Strikers were always in command against a depleted Mt.Gravatt who was forced to recall veteran keeper Graeme Ross as its four keepers in five games.

Strikers' frontman Josh Rose was one of the stars for the home side netting a goal in each half.

The speedy Rose opened the scoring in the 15th minute with a glancing header off a corner at the near post.

The ever reliable Alex Panic made it 2-nil just past the half hour when he finished off a good Strikers' build-up before its final goal came late in the game when Rose beat his defender with a powerful low strike from 18 metres.

Hamilton never feared Mt. Gravatt at any stage of the game.

"We were always in control. We dominated the first half and had a lot of ball in the second half.

"They had a couple of chances but generally they never threatened us."

Mt. Gravatt coach Ken Swan conceded his side was no match for the league leaders.

"They were too good and a better class than us on the night," Swan said.

"We didn't mark well enough for the first goal off the corner and we thought their second goal was offside.

"We had a couple of decent chances after the break but their keeper, Anthony Hall, made some good saves."

The loss has thrown Mt. Gravatt right into the relegation mix with the Hawks now only three points ahead of second bottom side Toowoomba following its upset 3-1 win over Rochedale.

"Unfortunately, we've had to use four keepers in five games and I had to call on Graeme Ross for this game," Swan said.

"It now looks like we'll need another keeper as Rossy pulled his hamstring."

"Daniel Duke has been training with us for a month and he's had a lot of national league experience with the Strikers but he hasn't played for two years since he broke a leg playing rugby league when he was out in the country teaching."

Brisbane Wolves are hovering just outside the top four following a hard fought 3-2 win Easts at Heath Park.

The Wolves led 3-nil at the break and looked set for a runaway victory but failed to capitalise on their first half dominance after the break.

Striker Sam Murdoch was one of the Wolves' star performers notching a double while the visitors other goal came from reliable striker Michael Van Moolenbroek.

Murdoch put the Wolves ahead 1-nil after only 10 minutes when he collected a ball and drove home a hard shot which took a deflection.

The visitors went ahead 2-nil midway through the first period when Van Moolenbroek volleyed a powerful shot home after the Wolves caught Easts on a breakaway.

The Wolves looked to have the match well sewn up five minutes before half time when Murdoch brilliantly turned his defender in the box to drive home hi side's third goal in the opening half.

However, the second half saw a change come over the game as the Wolves' intensity dropped off noticeably.

Easts got a sniff they were back in the game four minutes after the resumption when Dominic Laspina curled a shot past the Wolves' keeper to reduce the lead to 3-1.

Easts were on top of their opponents for most of the second period but its second goal came too late in the dying stages when Russell Kamo made it 3-2.

Wolves' player-coach Anthony Roche was pleased to win but was disappointed by its "Jekyll and Hyde" performance.

"We played okay in the first half and were cruising," he said.

"For some reason we fell asleep in the second half and they suddenly got a goal and a sniff and started to build a lot of pressure on us.

"It was a comfortable win but it could have been by six or seven."

Easts coach Graham Binney was annoyed with his side's effort.

"We defended badly all over the park and didn't close them down," he said.

"I told the players at half time they didn't show up for the first half.

"I thought the Wolves were an ordinary football side but they had a couple of good individuals."

Roche is now eagerly awaiting a return clash next round with leaders Brisbane Strikers.

"We drew with the Strikers in the first round after we hit the post three times," he said.

"We should have beaten them easily and we can't wait for the rematch."

Mitchelton turned its topsy turvy season around with a hard fought 1-ni win over Souths at Teralba Park on Saturday night.

Mitchelton have worked hard all season but injuries have frustrated coach Greg Brown whose side has lost seven of its 11 first round matches.

Brown conceded the score line flattered Mitchelton and believed a draw was a true reflection of the game.

The only goal of the game came after just three minutes from experienced midfielder Damien Waugh who headed home a Dan Lewis cross for a 1-nil lead at half time.

"I thought Souths deserved a point," conceded Brown.

"They had a lot of possession but we managed to frustrate them a lot.

"Both sides probably had an equal amount of shots at goal and we took our chances better which was the only difference between the sides.

"It was a hard game."

Mitchelton are widely recognised as having a strong squad and their position in the bottom half of the table doesn't do the club justice.

"I told the players before the game started to forget about our place on the table," Brown said.

"Three wins in this league is not a lot so we're not far away from the top sides.

"I'm not interested we're we are on the ladder and if we string a few results together then we'll be right in the picture."

Mitchelton had three regular players missing from the Souths clash while a fourth change was made on match day when the club learnt a player was suspended.

"We had three out with the 'flu and we had to make a late change on the day when we found out another player was suspended," Brown said.

"We went in with 10 players and I had to pluck a player from the Reserves to make up the numbers.

"Under those circumstances it was a huge result for us."

Souths coach Peter Tokesi believed his side deserved a draw and possibly should have collected three points.

"We did okay after conceding the early goal but we could have been up three goals at half time," Tokesi said.

"It should have been a draw at least."

Taringa Rovers central midfielder Andrew Imrie bagged his side's second goal in their 4-0 rout of Palm Beach

Josh Rose starred yet again for the Brisbane Strikers with a two-goal haul against Mt.Gravatt

Premier League Ladder
Round 11

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Brisbane Strikers	11	8	2	1	27	9	18	26
Pine Rivers	11	7	1	3	26	15	11	22
Taringa Rovers	11	7	0	4	27	20	7	21
Palm Beach	11	7	0	4	23	17	6	21
Brisbane Wolves	11	5	3	3	23	17	6	18
Rochedale Rovers	11	6	0	5	24	20	4	18
Brisbane City	11	6	0	5	12	14	-2	18
Souths United	11	5	2	4	20	13	7	17
Mitchelton	11	4	0	7	15	23	-8	12
Mt Gravatt	11	3	0	8	11	21	-10	9
Toowoomba	11	1	3	7	18	30	-12	6
Eastern Suburbs	11	1	1	9	13	40	-27	4

Premier Cup Results
Round 11

Palm Beach	0	Taringa Rovers	4
Eastern Suburbs	2	Brisbane Wolves	3
Mitchelton	1	Souths United	0
Brisbane Strikers	3	Mt Gravatt	0
Rochedale Rovers	1	Toowoomba	3
Brisbane City	0	Pine Rivers	1

FIXTURES
Round 12
Saturday 3rd June
Mitchelton V Pine Rivers
Brisbane Strikers V Brisbane Wolves
Rochedale Rovers V Mt Gravatt
Taringa Rovers V Toowoomba
Sunday 4th June
Eastern Suburbs V Souths United
Palm Beach V Brisbane City

VODAFONE CUP

Victorian Vodafone Cup Round 15

Knights break drought with win over Royals

The Melbourne Knights maintained their position in the top six of the Vodafone Cup after prevailing over the Essendon Royals at the Veneto Club on Friday.

An Andrew Barisic strike in the fourth minute secured the one-nil victory for the Knights, a win the visitors desperately needed after going four matches without obtaining a three-point haul.

"Tonight the boys tried hard and we played quite good (in) the first half, some exciting soccer," said Melbourne Knights coach Josip Biskic.

"Even (the) second half we had beautiful chances but unfortunate, again, we just missed a few of them. But the fighting spirit just paid off and I have to congratulate my guys for that because they stood up and fight for this result which is pretty important to us."

Chris Vernuccio

Magic hand Reds first home loss

Altona Magic became the first team to win at Grange Reserve this season, victorious 1-0 over Kingston City on Friday.

Sash Becvinovski's first half goal was enough to separate the sides, 3rd placed Altona moving within a point of 2nd placed Kingston.

Although Altona coach Ken Murphy would later declare his team had been instructed to "sit back", the fast passing Magic took the initiative from kickoff, with hectic movement on and off the ball.

The game started dramatically for Tomi Razov, the Altona midfielder going down with an injury to his left knee in the opening minute after a physical clash with Peter Koutsoupias. Koutsoupias was yellow carded for his challenge, Razov would leave the field in the 17th minute, but not before playing a part in the opening goal.

In the 16th minute it was Razov who beat a Kingston offside trap, and his touch opened up the left side of the goal face.

But instead of blazing away on his left form 12 yards, Razov laid off a pass for Ivan Razov overlapping to the left.

Ivan Razov's attempt to shoot was off target, but it slid across the face to an unmarked Sash Becvinovski at the far post.

With Kingston goalkeeper Daniel Zilic all at sea, Becvinovski had a simple side footed finish with his right foot from 5 yards, to give Altona a 1-0 lead that would stand for the duration of the match.

Teo Pellizzeri

Vodafone Cup Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Oakleigh Cannons	**14**	**9**	**3**	**2**	**29**	**16**	**30**
2 Kingston City	15	8	4	3	25	14	28
3 Altona Magic	15	7	6	2	20	12	27
4 South Melbourne	13	7	2	4	21	15	23
5 Bulleen Zebras	15	6	5	4	17	18	23
6 Melbourne Knights	14	5	5	4	20	17	20
7 Heidelberg United	15	5	5	5	22	22	20
8 Essendon Royals	15	4	5	6	15	19	17
9 Preston Lions	15	4	5	6	25	30	17
10 Fawkner-Whittlesea	14	5	1	8	26	29	16
11 Sunshine Georgies	15	4	4	7	18	21	16
12 Frankston Pines	15	4	3	8	15	24	15
13 Green Gully Cavs	14	2	6	6	16	22	12
14 Richmond	15	2	6	7	17	27	12

ROUND 15 RESULTS

Kingston City 0 Altona Magic 1, Frankston Pines 1 Richmond 1, Preston Lions 3 Sunshine Georgies 1, Green Gully Cavs 2 Bulleen Zebras 2, Heidelberg United 3 Oakleigh Cannons 1, Essendon Royals 0 Melbourne Knights 1

ROUND 16 FIXTURES

Friday 2 June

Oakleigh Cannons	v	Fawkner-Whittlsea
Richmond	v	Melbourne Knights

Saturday 3 June

Frankston Pines	v	Green Gully Cavs

Sunday 4 May

Preston Lions	v	Altona Magic
Sunshine Georgies	v	Essendon Royals
South Melbourne	v	Kingston City

Monday 5 May

Bulleen Zebras	v	Heidelberg United

GOLDEN BOOT LEADER BOARD

Saso Becvinovski Altona Magic 11
Michael Curcija Kingston 10
Anthony Magnacca Preston Lions 8
Esala Masi Oakleigh Cannons 8
Mark Tsiorlas Fawkner Whittlesea 8
Joe Spiteri Kingston City 7
James Robinson Richmond 7
Nathan Caldwell Melbourne Knights 6
Fernando De Moraes South Melbourne 6
Carl Recchia Fawkner Whittlesea 6
Nick Marinos Heidelberg United 6

Stubbins collects first point with Richmond

The trend of new coaches yielding instant results didn't quite ring true on Saturday when Phil Stubbins took the reigns at Richmond for their trip to Frankston Pines.

The match would finish locked at 1-1 after an opening quarter hour that promised plenty of goals that inevitably never came.

Boris Ovcin netted in the ninth minute for the home side but James Robinson put the Eagles on level terms shortly after.

Robinson's seventh goal of the season was to be the game's last as the sides arm wrestled for the remainder of the game, with neither side able to break through for a winner

Lions return to BT with big win over Georgies

Preston Lions returned to their spiritual home at B.T Connor Reserve, and continued their great run of form, easily overcoming the in-form Sunshine Georgies 3-1.

The Georgies who took the lead, in only the 5th minute through Fidel Richards, who has found a rich vein of goal scoring of late. Richards won the ball on the edge of the box, before playing a quick one-two with his strike partner Mark Draycott, before hitting a sublime left foot strike into the back of the net, leaving Prestons young keeper, Savas Ozdemir, with no chance.

In the 8th minute, a poor pass from Richards was intercepted by the lively Gasparis, who ran unchallenged before a defence splitting ball played in Lazarevski who calmly slotted home to level the scores.

As the tempo began to slow after a frantic opening, it was Preston who continued to press looking for the goal to send them into the lead.

And the pressure told in the 30th minute, when Karahan rose highest to head home a Magnacca cross into the bottom corner of the net.

Preston ensured they would collect all three points in the 81st minute, after Johnny Sapazovski beat Daniel Rocco to a long clearance from defence and flicked the ball on. Sapazovski continued to chase the ball and won the footrace against the advancing Martin John, poking it past him 30yards out.

But Sapazovski still had more work to do, as he beat the quickly covering defender, before finally slotting home the ball into an open goal to send the Lions faithful into raptures as he ran to celebrate with the fans.

Preston coach Goran Lozanovki was understandably happy with the performance. "If someone has said we can play like that every week for the rest of the season, I'd take it."

Jason McNamara

Oakleigh Cannons star Con Boutsianis (right) in action against Heidelberg United last weekend. (Photo - www.dannyphoto.com.au)

Gully improve but can't break Bulleen

The Cavaliers hosted the Zebras at Green Gully Reserve last night. There would be some reprise for the Gully supporters as their side earned a hard fought 2-2 draw.

The deadlock was broken in the 14th minute when Matthew Sanders bundled home an Andy Vargas corner.

Bulleen refused to lie down though, and drew level in the 21st minute when Ross Antoniadis sent a bullet header past the stranded Gully keeper, Pasi Schwalger, connecting with a well-executed Ari Dracos free-kick.

The equilibrium only lasted 2 minutes though as Phillip Riccobene found Jeff Fleming on the left for Gully, and his low hard cross was converted well by the on-rushing Sanders for his second of the game.

In the 86th minute, the Zebras claimed an unlikely and undeserved equaliser, with Ben Harbison looping a header over Schwalger who was caught in no-man's land, from a seemingly innocuous cross.

Heidelberg upset Oakleigh at the Village

Heidelberg took the lead after 27 minutes as Sebastian Petrovic was felled just outside the area - Vassiliaidis stepped up and whipped the ball in, finding the head of the unmarked Petrovic whose looping header found the back of the net despite the best attempts of Stuart Webster in the Oakleigh goal.

A heavy downpour greeted the players for the second period and the wet conditions made playing the ball very difficult. George Goutzoulis made the most of the conditions and he was rewarded with a penalty kick after a mistimed sliding tackle from Daniel Jones.

Although there appeared to be minimal contact, referee Senko Rastocic pointed to the spot. Anthony Pelikan stepped up and slotted the ball to the left of Lupce Ascevski.

The game changed in 2 second half minutes as 2 defensive errors from the Cannons led to Nick Marinos securing the three points for the Warriors. Felix Rosman's attempted clearance was mistimed as the ball sailed underneath his foot and Marinos made no mistake to make it 2-1 to the Warriors.

The game changed in two second half minutes as a pair of defensive errors from the Cannons led to Nick Marinos securing the three points for the Warriors.

Felix Rosman's attempted clearance was mistimed as the ball sailed underneath his foot and Marinos made no mistake to make it 2-1 to the Warriors.

Marinos couldn't believe his luck as only a minute later George Goutzoulis' attempted headed backpass to Webster landed at his feet and once again, Marinos beat Webster to ensure that the three points would be Heidelberg's.

Matthew McNamara

South Melbourne travelled to Epping Stadium for their Monday Night clash with Fawkner Whittlesea after deadline – visit www.footballfedvic.com.au for information on this game.

Action between the Frankston Pines and Richmond match that ended in a one-all draw (Photo by Darryl Kennedy)

SOCCER NSW LIFTOUT

Fever pitch hits as Continental Tyres Cup heats up

Continental
Tyres - Engineered in Germany.

The Continental Tyres Cup is approaching its climax with the final set down for Saturday June 10th. Wednesday night's semi-finals should be tough affairs with three Vodafone Premier League teams chasing a finals berth, as well as last season's Winter Super League champions Canterbury-Bankstown Berries, who renew their rivalry with the Blacktown City Demons at Fairfax Community Stadium.

Lambert Park hosts the other game, where the A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers hope to put last Sunday's loss behind them when they clash with Sydney United. Both games kick-off at 7.30pm.

Blacktown City Demons' Tolgay Ozbey has overtaken Tony Faria in the top goalscorer's charts with 15 for the season

KARAVATAKIS EDGES CLOSER TO 200 GOALS

Steve Karavatakis has edged a little closer to the magical 200-goal milestone with one of the goals of the season against Bankstown City Lions.

His 185th career goal was an audacious 40-yard lob which caught out Lions goalkeeper Zlatko Josevski.

"It was one of the best of my career," said Karavatakis.

OZBEY'S GOLDEN RUN CONTINUES

Tolgay Ozbey has taken the lead from Marconi midfielder Tony Faria in the race for the Golden Boot trophy. Ozbey's double against Parramatta F.C. has seen him leapfrog Faria to 15 goals – one ahead of his Newcastle Jets' teammate.

TURNER SETS PLANS FOR NEW SEASON

Wollongong Wolves John Turner is not taking his side's 5-1 loss to Manly United F.C. lying down, reminding his side that their spots in the squad are up for review. "Our plans for next season are well underway and everybody in this team has to earn a contract for next year." Turner is believed to be in negotiations with a number of high-profile players to join the Wolves next season.

ERREA PRIZE PACKS

Want to get your hands on some valauble gear and at the same time see your great goal on TV? Here's how.

Every Sunday on SBS TV at 2pm, **Football Stars of Tomorrow** will select a "Goal of the Week". Valued at over $200, each winner takes home a giveaway which includes a deluxe Errea Bag, t-shirt, soccer ball, shin pads, drink bottle, folder, training domes and a beanie.

All you have to do to be in the running for this great prize is send in your goal scored by an Australian male or female aged 6 to 17 years on DVD or VHS . Please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you would like your entry returned.

For further details, log onto soccernsw.com.au for an official "Goal of the Week" entry form.

Errea Weekly Prize pack valued at over $200.

GOOD SPORTS PROGRAM

Soccer NSW is pleased to announce its ongoing support for a programme which helps sports clubs maximise their responsibilities to players, fans and officials.

As of May, 2006, twenty (20) Soccer NSW clubs have registered in the Good Sports Program. The program aims to help clubs meet their duty of care obligations and to prevent alcohol-related problems and offences as well as providing free ongoing education and support.

There are currently 120 clubs from six different sports registered in the Program throughout NSW. To date Good Sports has received excellent support from Soccer NSW Associations and clubs and they are currently liaising with other Associations and Local Government Areas with a view to implementing the program in additional areas.

Congratulations to the following Soccer NSW Associations and members that have already registered and are participating in the Good Sports Program. Soccer Albury Wodonga, Bankstown, Ku-Ring-Gai, Far South Coast, Macarthur, Futsal, Illawarra Juniors, Canterbury, Mitchell, Blacktown and Shoalhaven.

For more information on the Good Sports Program visit www.goodsports.com.au <http://www.goodsports.com.au/>

COACHING SEMINARS: VALENTINE SPORTS PARK & WOLLONGONG

Soccer NSW, proudly presents two coaching seminars to be staged by

Oswaldo De Oliveira:
Head Coach of legendary Brazilian side, Fluminense Football Club from Rio de Janeiro.

Venue: Seminar (1) Balls Paddock, Luxor Street, WOONONA
Date: Wednesday 7th June, 2006

Seminar (2) Valentine Sports Park, GLENWOOD
Date: Thursday 8th June, 2006
For further information, please contact Soccer NSW on 8814 4400.

WRITERS: Greg Stock, Paul Goodwin
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● *All information is courtesy of SOCCER NSW*

SOCCER NSW
Valentine Sport Park
235-257 Meurants Lane,
GLENWOOD NSW 2768
Phone: (02) 8814 4400
website: www.soccernsw.com.au

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2006 VODAFONE PREMIER LEAGUE SEASON

• FIRST GRADE • ROUND 15

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Blacktown City Demons	**15**	**12**	**2**	**1**	**42**	**14**	**28**	**38**
Marconi Stallions	14	10	0	4	38	19	19	30
Sydney United	15	9	2	4	32	20	12	29
Bankstown City Lions	15	7	3	5	30	27	3	24
Sydney Olympic	14	6	2	6	22	26	-4	20
Manly United FC	15	5	4	6	26	24	2	19
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	15	3	4	8	16	29	-13	13
Wollongong Wolves	15	4	1	10	24	42	-18	13
Parramatta FC	15	3	3	9	13	25	-12	12
Sutherland Shire Sharks	15	3	3	9	20	37	-17	12

• GRADE 20 • ROUND 15

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Marconi Stallions	**14**	**11**	**2**	**1**	**36**	**9**	**27**	**35**
Sydney United	15	8	4	3	26	14	12	28
Bankstown City Lions	15	7	3	5	26	19	7	24
Blacktown City Demons	15	7	2	6	28	25	3	23
Parramatta FC	15	7	1	7	24	24	0	22
Manly United FC	15	5	5	5	17	23	-6	20
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	15	4	5	6	17	22	-5	17
Sutherland Shire Sharks	15	4	4	7	15	26	-11	16
Wollongong Wolves	15	3	3	9	12	24	-12	12
Sydney Olympic	14	2	3	9	18	33	-15	9

A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt's Aaron Burgess (right) is watched closely by Sydney United's Mile Jedinak (left)

VODAFONE PREMIER LEAGUE ROUND 16

Saturday Night - June 3

Sutherland Shire Sharks vs A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers
7:30pm Seymour Shaw,
The Boulevarde, Miranda

Marconi Stallions vs Sydney United
7:30pm Marconi Stadium,
Marconi Plaza, Bossley Park

Sunday Night - June 4

Bankstown City Lions vs Blacktown City Demons
3:00pm Melita Stadium,
Everley Rd, South Granville

Wollongong Wolves vs Parramatta FC
3:00pm WIN Stadium,
Harbour Centre, Wollongong

Sydney Olympic vs Manly United FC
6:00pm Belmore Sports Ground,
Outer Adison Lane Ground, Belmore

www.soccernsw.com.au

Reminder - Round 15 Fixture - Wednesday 31st May, Marconi Stallions v Sydney Olympic 8pm Marconi Stadium

LEADING GOALSCORERS

15 Tolgay Ozbey (BCD),
14 Tony Faria (MS),
9 James Monie (MU),
8 Luke Roodenburg (BCD),
7 John Buonavoglia (MS), o.g.
6 Chima Nwaogazi (BCL), Pablo Cardozo (SU), Adam Casey (WW), Matt Borg (BCL)

PLAYER OF THE ROUND

Hat-trick hero James Monie edges out fellow triple-scorer, Matt Borg of Bankstown, with overdue recognition of Monie's efforts giving him the nod.

It was Monie's first ever three-goal haul, but heís already found the net nine times this season and his weekend effort led Manly to complete the double over Wollongong.

VODAFONE PREMIER LEAGUE: ROUND 15

FIRST GRADE: Blacktown City Demons 3 (Tolgay Ozbey 10'/43', Luke Roodenburg 74') **Parramatta FC 1** (Patrick Gatt 67'), **A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers 1** (Cameron Jones 26') **Sydney United 2** (Ben Vidaic 69', Greg Owens 77'), **Manly United FC 5** (Richard Williams 25' pen, James Monie 38'/47'/82', Joe Schirripa 73') **Wollongong Wolves 1** (Adam Casey 83'), **Bankstown City Lions 4** (Matthew Borg 3'/8'/32', Shane Webb 78') **Sutherland Sharks 1** (Steve Karavatakis 88').

GRADE 20: Blacktown City Demons 2 (S Mitchell 28/55') **Parramatta FC 1** (D Bonne 87'), **A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers 0 Sydney United 1** (I Bosnar 37'), **Manly United FC 1** (M Gale 93') **Wollongong Wolves 1** (D Boscoscuro 56'), **Bankstown City Lions 1** (J Issa 70') **Sutherland Sharks 1** (L Gomez Castro 18').

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE "SEE THE STARS OF TOMORROW, TODAY"

vodafone

2006 VODAFONE PREMIER LEAGUE SEASON

Sharks smashed by hungry Lions

Bankstown City Lions attacker Matt Borg hit a hat-trick against the hapless Sutherland Shire Sharks

Bankstown City Lions 4
(M Borg 3', 8', 32', S Webb 78')

Sutherland Sharks 1
(S Karavatakis 88')

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS: Zlatko Josevski, Matt Pressello, Peter Tsekenis (c), Marc Hoenselaars (Peter Vassilis 76'), Paul Kohler (Ibrahim Ha, Jar 72'), Phil Makrys, Marino Museneci, Shane Webb, Robert Mileski, Mathew Borg, Chimaobi Nwaogazi (Sam Mort 60')

Subs not used: RGK Ivan Kovacevic, Omar Saadi

Yellow Cards: Nil
Red Cards: Nil
Player-coach: Peter Tsekenis

SUTHERLAND SHARKS: Alex Augusto, George Souris (c), Matthew Hunter, Jack Sobczyk, Ben Spruce, Daniel Borg (Michael Hawrysiuk 60'), Daniel Cummins, Matthew Smith (Domenic Romeo 72'), Nahuel Arrarte, Paul Wither (Steve Karavatakis 60'), James Lawrence

Subs not used: RGK Stewart Vella, Steve Baveas

Coach: Stewart Porter
Yellow Cards: Ben Spruce, George Souris
Red Cards: Nil
Referee: Jonathan Streater
Assistant Referees: Terry Goodhew, Atila Stibinger
Fourth Official: Stephen Duckitt

By Paul Goodwin

An impressive Bankstown City side hit four past the hapless Sutherland Sharks in a much-awaited return to form at Melita Stadium on Sunday night.

The mercurial Matt Borg grabbed a hat trick and the Sharks were a well-beaten side by the finish, and stay anchored to the foot of the ladder.

In the third minute a through ball from outside the 18 yard box by Chimaobi Nwaogazi saw Borg shoot low past the Sutherland keeper to open the Lions' account.

On 21 minutes it was the same duo who did the damage with Nwaogazi crossing for Borg, who finished nicely.

The match was as good as over when Robert Mileski's high cross was fumbled by the Sutherland keeper Alex Augusto, leaving the predatory Borg to snatch his third.

In the 78th, a nice exchange of passes Shane Webb and Mileski ended with the latter striking the Lions' fourth from 25 yards out.

Sutherland got a consolation goal in the 88th when Steve Karavatakis hit a long and swerving shot over keeper Zlatko Josevski's head to make it 4-1, but the goal did little to liven the spirits of the few diehard Sharks fans who made the journey west.

The win was Bankstown's seventh win of the season to put them into fourth spot, while Sutherland, sitting in last place, are running out of time to add to their meagre three wins.

Bankstown City Lions	4
Sutherland Sharks	1

Shane Webb grabbed Bankstown's fourth goal with a neat finish

Manly thump stray Wolves

By Paul Goodwin

Manly United completed the double over Wollongong Wolves with a tidy 5-1 win at Cromer Park on Sunday evening.

Although the Wolves finished the Vodafone Premier League game with only nine men, the result was never in doubt after the locals went 3-0 up by half time.

It was a game where Manly striker James Monie came into his own, claiming a well-deserved hat trick and creating havoc all night long.

The rout began in the 4th minute when Monie got to the near post to collect Joe Schirripa's corner, flicking the ball past Wolves' keeper Nathan Denham.

In the 25th minute, referee James Lewis spotted a handball by Vedran Jaganjac, leaving Manly captain Richie Williams put his side on course for victory.

Monie added the third in the 38th, when he got his head to another cross from dead-ball specialist Schirripa.

Midway through the second half Schirripa got one of his own to made it 4-0, before Wolves pulled one back in the 83rd minute thanks after a nice finish from Adam Casey.

But Manly weren't done, and when Monie picked up a Roberto Hamad cross from the left in the 87th, and finished clinically from eight yards, his hat trick was complete.

"Jimmy really deserved that hat trick. He has been playing well all season," said Manly coach Phil Moss.

"Ashley Ryan made a great debut for us but really today it was a great team effort."

Manly United 5
(R Williams 25' pen, J Monie 38', 47', 82', J Schirripa 73')

MANLY UNITED: Luke Fernia, Richie Williams (c), Daniel Lock, Nikolai Topor-Stanley, Anthony Martin, Andrew Maller (Brad Groves 70'), Scott Thomas, Ashley Ryan, Joe Schirripa (Roberto Hamad 74'), Michael Williams (Robbie Cattanach 78'), James Monie

Subs not used: RGK Marty Hall, Pascal Julliard

Coach: Phil Moss
Yellow Cards: Nil
Red Card: Nil

Wollongong Wolves 1
(A Casey 83')

WOLLONGONG WOLVES: Nathan Denham, Chris Rigopoulos, Ian Waldron, Andrew Mumford, Vedran Jaganjac (Adam Casey 60), Dustin Wells, Dean Kerr, Chris Price, Bailamodou Conde (c), Wayne Gibson (David Polidoro 75'), Steven Hayes

Subs not used: RGK Stacy Alogdellis, Tony Perinich, David Boscoscuro

Coach: John Turner
Yellow Cards: Steve Hayes
Red Cards: Andy Mumford and Steve Hayes
Referee: James Lewis
Assistant Referees: Damien Wanstall and Sarah Ho
Fourth Official: Dom Filipovic

Manly United	5
Wollongong Wolves	1

Joey Schirripa played a cameo role in Manly United's 5-1 thrashing of Wollongong Wolves

2006 VODAFONE PREMIER LEAGUE SEASON

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE "SEE THE STARS OF TOMORROW, TODAY" | vodafone

United beat Tigers but lose Halpin

By Greg Stock

Sydney United will be without star midfielder Troy Halpin for their Continental Cup Semi-Final this Wednesday night after he was sent off in United's 2-1 win over A.P.I.A. Leichhardt.

The former Socceroo was red carded by referee Alex Glasgow for an elbowing incident early in the second half, but his loss sparked United's revival as they staged a dramatic comeback to come from 1-0 down to take all three points.

"Our first half was ordinary but we knuckled down in the second and the boys showed a huge willingness to dig deep and fight back," said United coach Jean Paul de Marigny.

The Tigers were well on top in the first half and had midfielder Cameron Jones to thank for putting away a free kick in the 36th minute.

Jones was again in the thick of the action again when he was struck by Halpin's elbow early in the second half, but, sadly for the Tigers, this was their high water mark as United regrouped after some inspired substitutions from de Marigny.

Ben Vidaic beat Tigers goalkeeper Mitchell Blowes from a tight angle in the 69th minute, before Greg Owens slotted home a miscued clearance to give United their sixth win from their past eight games.

"We had to battle hard for this result, this wasn't an easy game but we did what we had to do," continued de Marigny.

"The result will certainly gives us some confidence going into the Cup Semi-Final this Wednesday."

Sydney United's match winner Greg Owens (left) in action against A.P.I.A. midfielder Cameron Jones (right)

A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt	1
Sydney United	2

Sydney United's Troy Halpin (right) receives his marching orders from referee Alex Glasgow (centre) as A.P.I.A. Leichhardt's Cameron Jones (left) looks on

Sydney United players celebrate Ben Vidaic's 69th minute equaliser

A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt 1
(C Jones 26')
Sydney United 2
(B Vidaic 69', G Owens 77')

A.P.I.A. LEICHHARDT TIGERS: Mitchell Blowes, Paul Dee, Robbie Stanton (Daniel McCann 69'), Nathan Moulds, Richard Luksic, Grant Last, Aaron Burgess (Grant Maundrell 61'), Steve Bozinovski, Yavus Ekinci (Jimmy Nikas 76'), Cameron Jones, Peter Peralta
Coach: Les DeCelis.

SYDNEY UNITED: Matthew Cox, Ante Juric, Mile Jedinak, Todd Brodie, Mitchell Thompson, Petar Markovic, Marko Filipovic (Palmieri 55'), Troy Halpin, Greg Owens, Pablo Cardozo (Ben Vidaic 52'), Luka Glavas (Joe Vrkic 52')
Coach: Jean Paul de Marigny.
Yellow Cards: Vidaic (SU) 84'
Red Card: Halpin (SU) 51'

Referee: Alex Glasgow
Assistant Referees: Murray Wilson and David Fuda
Fourth Official: Matt Gillett

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE "SEE THE STARS OF TOMORROW, TODAY" vodafone

2006 VODAFONE PREMIER LEAGUE SEASON

Rampant Demons dismantle Parramatta

A diving Stuart Page cannot with-stand a venemous strike from Demons striker Tolgay Ozbey

Blacktown City Demons	3
Parramatta FC	1

Two goal hero Tolgay Ozbey (right) celebrates his double strike with fellow teammate Michael Brown (left)

By Paul Goodwin

Blacktown City took their Vodafone Premier League winning run to fourteen with a 3-1 victory over neighbours Parramatta FC at Fairfax Community Stadium on Saturday night.

The Demons gained the upper hand in the tenth minute when Kain Rastall slipped the ball to the lively Tolgay Ozbey, who ripped a scorching drive past Parramatta goalkeeper Stuart Page.

Parramatta should have equalised soon after, but Ben Delicata's point-blank shot was superbly stopped by Ivan Necevski.

Two minutes before the break, Luke Roodenburg - who had earlier received a plaque commemorating his 100th game for the club - cleverly lifted the ball to Ozbey, who took a deft touch before hitting an unstoppable volley into the roof of the net, handing Blacktown a two-goal buffer.

In the 67th minute, Parramatta gained a glimmer of hope when Pat Gatt was on hand to poke home after a defensive mix-up.

However, just seven minutes later, the two-goal margin was restored when Demons' substitute, Ante Deur, played a superb pass for Ivan Zelic, who took on the defence before crossing to Roodenburg for the sealer.

"We did what we had to do to secure a positive result," said Blacktown coach Aytek Genc said.

"I think that the building of this team is a work in progress and that we still have plenty to do before I am completely happy with the way we play the game".

Blacktown City Demons' hard working midfielder Michael Brown (right) is closely monitored by Parramatta FC defender Angelo Petratos (left)

Blacktown City Demons . .3
(T Ozbey 10', 43', L Roodenburg 74')
Parramatta FC 1
(P Gatt 67')

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS: Ivan Necevski, Paul Karbon, Damien Foxe (c), Bobby Dragas, Mirko Jurilj, Kain Rastall, Ivan Zelic (Roger Galayini 79'), Michael Brown, Milorad Simonovic (Ante Deur 80'), Luke Roodenburg, Tolgay Ozbey (Ben Gough 80')
Subs not used: RGK Matt Nemes, Harris Gaitatzis
Coach: Aytek Genc
Yellow Cards: Bobby Dragas, Damien Foxe
Red Cards: Nil

PARRAMATTA FC: Stuart Page, Pat Gatt, Emmanuel Zunino, Jon Kelso (Chris Camilleri 79'), Daniel Clifford, Ben Delicata (c) Erik Paartalu, Angelo Petratos (Leo Carle 60'), Nathan Rivera (Russell Woodruffe 89'), Robbie Gomez, Shannon Cole
Subs Not Used: RGK Ben Wunsch, Emmanuel Giannaros,
Coach: Raul Blanco
Yellow Cards: Angelo Petratos, Daniel Clifford, Nathan Rivera, Emmanuel Zunino
Red Card: Nil
Referee: Greg Leverton

Assistant Referees: Stephen Rainey and Steve Alexander
Fourth Official: Kurt Ams

NSW PREMIER STATE & YOUTH RESULTS & TABLES

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE: ROUND 13

FIRST GRADE: Blacktown Spartans 4 (J Sciberras 8m G McPherson 19m S Falanga 20m L Infanti 44m) Springwood SC 2 (own goal 6m M Haberman 17m), Hurstville ZSC 0 Schofields Scorpions 1 (A Ucchino 75m), Fairfeild Bulls 2 (O Shlaimon 16m R Yelda 27m) Ryde City 0, Belmore Hercules 0 Hurstville City Minotaurs 1 (G Iliopoulos 60m), Gladesville Spirit 5 (M Drummond 36m N George-Coker 63/80m A Peaty 68m L Papanicolaou 73m) Hills United 1 (J Miller 59m), Inter Lions 1 (S Biviano 57m) Mt Pritchard 0, Mt Druitt Town 8 (A Jennings 5m R Portelli 43/54/66/79m M Lancaster 84m N Varess 87/88m) White City 2 (J Zrinjanin 35m M Tamburic 50m).

GRADE 20: Blacktown Spartans 0 Springwood SC 0, Hurstville ZSC 2 Schofields Scorpions 3, Fairfeild Bulls 2 Ryde City 0, Belmore Hercules 0 Hurstville City Minotaurs 1, Gladesville Spirit 1 Hills United 0, Inter Lions 2 Mt Pritchard 3, Mt Druitt Town 4 White City 0.

RESCHEDULED GAMES: ROUND 2:

FIRST GRADE: Belmore Hercules 1 Fairfield Bulls 0.

GRADE 20: Belmore Hercules 1 Fairfield Bulls 1.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE: ROUND 13 FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Schofields Scorpions	13	8	3	2	27	14	13	27
Gladesville Spirit	13	8	2	3	37	14	23	26
Mt Pritchard	13	8	2	3	30	14	16	26
Blacktown Spartans	13	8	2	3	30	17	13	26
Inter Lions	13	8	1	4	28	19	9	25
Mt Druitt Town	13	7	3	3	29	15	14	24
Fairfield Bulls	13	5	3	5	17	16	1	18
Belmore Hercules	13	4	5	4	15	15	0	17
Hurstville ZSC	13	5	2	6	15	21	-6	17
Springwood	13	5	1	7	22	24	-2	16
Hills United	13	3	3	7	13	28	-15	12
Hurstville City Min	13	3	2	8	16	27	-11	11
Ryde City	13	1	4	8	9	24	-15	7
White City	13	1	1	11	12	52	-40	4

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE: ROUND 13 GRADE 20

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Schofields Scorpions	13	11	1	1	57	10	47	34
Mt Pritchard	13	11	1	1	43	17	26	34
Gladesville Spirit	13	8	2	3	31	15	16	26
Blacktown Spartans	13	8	2	3	22	9	13	26
Inter Lions	13	7	2	4	37	16	21	23
Hills United	13	6	3	4	28	15	13	21
Fairfield Bulls	13	5	2	6	12	20	-8	17
Hurstville City Min	13	5	1	7	19	33	-14	16
Mt Druitt Town	13	4	2	7	18	25	-7	14
Belmore Hercules	13	4	1	8	14	28	-14	13
Ryde City	13	4	0	9	14	28	-14	12
Springwood	13	3	3	7	17	38	-21	12
Hurstville ZSC	13	3	2	8	18	24	-6	11
White City	13	1	0	12	9	61	-52	3

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO: ROUND 12

FIRST GRADE: Balmain SC 3 (D Totaro 40m A Trieste 52m J Deasey 75m) Greenisland SC 3 (D Manirakiza 29m A Kabbara 33/37m), Kellyville Kolts 2 (S Rompes 59m L Delaney 66m) Lakemba Sports Club 2 (J Maarabani 18m N Fayad 25m), Hakoah 0 Fogolar Wanderers 0, Auburn Stars 1 (N Wynne 90m) Bathurst 75 3 (G Dowling 2/47/55m), Prospect United 4 (D Miralles 13/47/73m M Stead 49m) Camden Tigers 1 (G King 82m).

GRADE 20: Balmain SC 6 Greenisland SC 1, Kellyville Kolts 2 Lakemba Sports Club 3, Hakoah 5 Fogolar Wanderers 0, Auburn Stars 1 Bathurst 75 4, Prospect United 1 Camden Tigers 1.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO: ROUND 12 FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
UNSW	10	7	3	0	29	9	20	24
Balmain	10	5	5	0	17	8	9	20
Lakemba Sports Club	10	4	6	0	16	10	6	18
Hakoah	10	5	1	4	8	10	-2	16
Kellyville Kolts	10	4	3	3	15	12	3	15
Fogolar Wanderers	9	4	2	3	15	10	5	14
Prospect United	10	4	1	5	14	16	-2	13
Greenisland	9	2	4	3	18	21	-3	10
Bathurst '75	10	2	2	6	11	17	-6	8
Camden Tigers	10	2	2	6	11	19	-8	8
Auburn Stars	10	0	1	9	4	26	-22	1

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO: ROUND 12 GRADE 20

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
UNSW	10	9	0	1	33	12	21	27
Balmain	10	7	3	0	26	7	19	24
Hakoah	10	7	1	2	32	13	19	22
Lakemba Sports Club	10	4	5	1	23	18	5	17
Kellyville Kolts	10	4	2	4	21	19	2	14
Greenisland	10	3	4	3	9	16	-7	13
Camden Tigers	10	3	2	5	18	24	-6	11
Fogolar Wanderers	10	3	2	5	14	20	-6	11
Prospect United	10	2	2	6	18	21	-3	8
Bathurst '75	10	1	1	8	8	29	-21	4
Auburn Stars	10	0	2	8	10	33	-23	2

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION THREE: ROUND 8

FIRST GRADE: Luddenham United 0 Hawkesbury City 3, Gazy Lansvale 3 Colo Colo 2, East Coast Magic PCYC 3 Roosters FC 3, Lithgow Workmen 3 Gladesville United 2.

RESERVE GRADE: Luddenham United 2 Hawkesbury City 9, Gazy Lansvale 1 Colo Colo 7, East Coast Magic PCYC 3 Roosters FC 1, Lithgow Workmen 2 Gladesville United 5.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION THREE: ROUND 8 FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Hawkesbury City	8	6	0	2	33	8	25	18
East Coast Magic	8	5	2	1	26	17	9	17
Roosters FC	8	4	3	1	22	11	11	15
Gladesville United	7	4	1	2	22	11	11	13
Colo Colo	8	3	1	4	16	13	3	10
Gazy Lansvale	7	3	1	3	13	23	-10	10
Lithgow Workmen	8	1	1	6	9	31	-22	4
Luddenham United	8	0	1	7	2	29	-27	1

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION THREE: ROUND 8 RESERVE GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Colo Colo	8	7	1	0	38	5	33	22
Gladesville United	7	6	0	1	39	17	22	18
East Coast Magic	8	5	1	2	38	11	27	16
Hawkesbury City	8	4	1	3	30	15	15	13
Roosters FC	8	4	1	3	26	16	10	13
Lithgow Workmen	8	2	0	6	14	31	-17	6
Gazy Lansvale	7	1	0	6	10	29	-19	3
Luddenham United	8	0	0	8	9	80	-71	0

Arrive alive

NSW GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 12

GRADE 12: Southern Branch 2 Blacktown Spartans 1, Central Coast Lightning 0 Northern Tigers 2, St George FC 5 Bathurst City 0, Illawarra Stingrays 1 Penrith Nepean United 1, Sydney University 0 NWS Koalas 4, Gladesville Ravens 0 Manly United FC 3, UNSW 1 Marconi Stallions 2, Macarthur Rams 0 Sutherland Sharks 0.

GRADE 14: Southern Branch 3 Blacktown Spartans 0, Central Coast Lightning 0 Northern Tigers 0, St George FC 3 Bathurst City 1, Illawarra Stingrays 0 Penrith Nepean United 1, Sydney University 0 NWS Koalas 3, Gladesville Ravens 0 Manly United FC 1, UNSW 0 Marconi Stallions 2, Macarthur Rams 1 Sutherland Sharks 2.

GRADE 16: Southern Branch 2 Blacktown Spartans 1, Central Coast Lightning 4 Northern Tigers 0, St George FC 1 Bathurst City 1, Illawarra Stingrays 0 Penrith Nepean United 4, Sydney University 0 NWS Koalas 9, Gladesville Ravens 1 Manly United FC 0, UNSW 0 Marconi Stallions 10, Macarthur Rams 5 Sutherland Sharks 0.

Arrive alive

NSW GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 12 GRADE 12

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Manly United FC	11	10	0	1	29	4	25	30
NW Sydney Koalas	11	9	1	1	22	1	21	28
Illawarra Stingrays	11	8	3	0	30	7	23	27
Northern Tigers	11	8	0	3	23	9	14	24
Penrith Nepean United	11	7	2	2	29	8	21	23
Central Coast Lightning	11	6	3	2	17	7	10	21
Sutherland Sharks	11	5	3	3	16	10	6	18
Macarthur Rams	11	4	3	4	16	12	4	15
St George FC	11	3	4	4	15	12	3	13
Southern Branch	11	3	3	5	11	13	-2	12
Marconi Stallions	11	3	3	5	9	12	-3	12
Gladesville Ravens	11	3	0	8	7	22	-15	9
UNSW	11	1	3	7	5	21	-16	6
Sydney University	11	2	0	9	3	39	-36	6
Blacktown Spartans	11	1	2	8	6	27	-21	5
Bathurst City	11	0	0	11	1	35	-34	0

Arrive alive

NSW GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 12 GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Central Coast Lightning	11	10	1	0	26	3	23	31
NW Sydney Koalas	11	9	2	0	36	3	33	29
Marconi Stallions	11	8	2	1	25	10	15	26
Penrith Nepean United	11	8	1	2	35	8	27	25
Southern Branch	11	8	1	2	25	8	17	25
Manly United FC	11	5	4	2	18	11	7	19
Sutherland Sharks	11	5	3	3	29	14	15	18
Sydney University	11	5	1	5	13	20	-7	16
Northern Tigers	11	4	3	4	11	16	-5	15
St George FC	11	4	2	5	16	15	1	14
Macarthur Rams	11	4	0	7	11	17	-6	12
Bathurst City	11	2	2	7	6	22	-16	8
Illawarra Stingrays	11	1	2	8	6	21	-15	5
Gladesville Ravens	11	1	0	10	2	23	-21	3
Blacktown Spartans	11	0	3	8	1	26	-25	3
UNSW	11	0	1	10	0	43	-43	1

Arrive alive

NSW GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 12 GRADE 16

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Penrith Nepean United	11	9	2	0	67	4	63	29
NW Sydney Koalas	11	9	2	0	52	5	47	29
Macarthur Rams	11	8	2	1	50	5	45	26
St George FC	11	8	1	2	33	15	18	25
Central Coast Lightning	11	7	2	2	25	8	17	23
Bathurst City	11	6	2	3	23	22	1	20
Manly United FC	11	6	1	4	29	9	20	19
Sutherland Sharks	11	6	1	4	36	17	19	19
Southern Branch	11	4	3	4	22	18	4	15
Marconi Stallions	11	3	2	6	20	18	2	11
Illawarra Stingrays	11	3	1	7	12	18	-6	10
Gladesville Ravens	11	3	0	8	10	23	-13	9
Sydney University	11	3	0	8	9	44	-35	9
Northern Tigers	11	2	1	8	19	37	-18	7
Blacktown Spartans	11	1	0	10	11	36	-25	3
UNSW	11	0	0	11	0	139	-139	0

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 14

GRADE 13: Penrith Nepean United 2 Sydney Olympic 0, A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 2 Sydney United 1, Bankstown City Lions 3 Wollongong Wolves 0, Sutherland Shire Sharks 0 Gladesville Spirit 2, Manly United FC 0 St George 0, Marconi Stallions 5 Schofields Scorpions 0, Blacktown City 1 Parramatta FC 2.

GRADE 14: Penrith Nepean United 2 Sydney Olympic 0,A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 0 Sydney United 2, Bankstown City Lions 1 Wollongong Wolves 1, Sutherland Shire Sharks 0 Gladesville Spirit 2, Manly United FC 1 St George 2, Marconi Stallions 4 Schofields Scorpions 0, Blacktown City 4 Parramatta FC 0.

GRADE 15: Penrith Nepean United 1 Sydney Olympic 0, A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 0 Sydney United 2, Bankstown City Lions 1 Wollongong Wolves 1, Sutherland Shire Sharks 2 Gladesville Spirit 3, Manly United FC 4 St George 0, Marconi Stallions 2 Schofields Scorpions 0, Blacktown City 2 Parramatta FC 1.

GRADE 16: Penrith Nepean United 0 Sydney Olympic 0, A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 1 Sydney United 0, Bankstown City Lions 0 Wollongong Wolves 2, Sutherland Shire Sharks 1 Gladesville Spirit 2, Manly United FC 3 St George 0, Marconi Stallions 3 Schofields Scorpions 1, Blacktown City 1 Parramatta FC 0.

GRADE 18: Penrith Nepean United 1 Sydney Olympic 2, A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 2 Sydney United 3, Bankstown City Lions Wollongong Wolves Postponed, Sutherland Shire Sharks 0 Gladesville Spirit 0, Manly United FC 1 St George 0, Marconi Stallions 3 Schofields Scorpions 3, Blacktown City 1 Parramatta FC 0.

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 14 GRADE 13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	14	11	1	2	48	8	40	34
Blacktown City Demons	14	11	1	2	47	11	36	34
Parramatta FC	14	10	1	3	33	18	15	31
Sydney United	14	8	2	4	25	17	8	26
Manly United FC	14	7	4	3	19	15	4	25
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	14	7	1	6	18	21	-3	22
Penrith Nepean United	13	6	2	5	14	18	-4	20
Sutherland Shire	14	5	4	5	18	14	4	19
Bankstown City Lions	14	4	4	6	18	20	-2	16
Sydney Olympic	14	4	3	7	13	22	-9	15
Wollongong Wolves	13	3	2	8	13	34	-21	11
Schofields Scorpions	14	2	4	8	16	40	-24	10
St George Saints	14	0	5	9	10	28	-18	5
Gladesville Spirit	14	1	2	11	9	35	-26	5

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 14 GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	14	11	2	1	44	6	38	35
Blacktown City Demons	14	11	2	1	39	7	32	35
St George Saints	14	9	1	4	29	15	14	28
Sydney United	14	8	3	3	27	19	8	27
Parramatta FC	14	8	2	4	22	18	4	26
Gladesville Spirit	14	8	1	5	23	17	6	25
Manly United FC	14	7	2	5	21	18	3	23
Wollongong Wolves	13	5	3	5	15	15	0	18
Bankstown City Lions	14	4	3	7	22	21	1	15
Penrith Nepean United	13	4	3	6	21	25	-4	15
Sydney Olympic	14	3	2	9	15	32	-17	11
Sutherland Shire	14	3	1	10	14	28	-14	10
Schofields Scorpions	14	1	3	10	7	34	-27	6
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	14	1	0	13	12	56	-44	3

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 14 GRADE 15

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Blacktown City Demons	14	12	1	1	40	8	32	37
Marconi Stallions	14	11	2	1	41	8	33	35
Manly United FC	14	9	1	4	30	16	14	28
Sydney United	14	9	0	5	29	17	12	27
Schofields Scorpions	14	7	2	5	18	20	-2	23
St George Saints	14	6	3	5	15	20	-5	21
Penrith Nepean United	13	6	0	7	13	28	-15	18
Bankstown City Lions	14	4	4	6	14	25	-11	16
Sutherland Shire	14	4	3	7	26	25	1	15
Sydney Olympic	14	3	6	5	14	17	-3	15
Parramatta FC	14	4	2	8	19	30	-11	14
Wollongong Wolves	13	3	2	8	10	30	-20	11
Gladesville Spirit	14	3	1	10	19	30	-11	10
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	14	2	1	11	7	21	-14	7

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 14 GRADE 16

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	14	11	1	2	33	9	24	34
Manly United FC	14	9	2	3	32	13	19	29
St George Saints	14	9	1	4	36	21	15	28
Wollongong Wolves	13	8	4	1	17	6	11	28
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	14	8	4	2	16	12	4	28
Blacktown City Demons	14	7	3	4	18	13	5	24
Sydney Olympic	14	5	3	6	16	16	0	18
Sutherland Shire	14	4	4	6	17	19	-2	16
Gladesville Spirit	14	5	1	8	15	29	-14	16
Sydney United	14	5	0	9	8	16	-8	15
Parramatta FC	14	3	3	8	16	28	-12	12
Schofields Scorpions	14	3	2	9	20	28	-8	11
Bankstown City Lions	14	2	3	9	12	29	-17	9
Penrith Nepean United	13	1	3	9	7	24	-17	6

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 14 GRADE 18

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	14	12	1	1	38	11	27	37
Blacktown City Demons	14	8	2	4	24	11	13	26
Sydney Olympic	14	7	4	3	24	11	13	25
Wollongong Wolves	12	7	3	2	25	15	10	24
Bankstown City Lions	13	7	1	5	20	19	1	22
Sutherland Shire	14	4	8	2	21	16	5	20
Penrith Nepean United	13	5	4	4	19	19	0	19
Parramatta FC	14	5	2	7	19	19	0	17
Manly United FC	14	5	2	7	21	28	-7	17
Gladesville Spirit	14	4	4	6	23	25	-2	16
St George Saints	14	3	5	6	17	18	-1	14
Sydney United	14	4	2	8	19	30	-11	14
Schofields Scorpions	14	2	5	7	27	46	-19	11
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	14	0	3	11	13	42	-29	3

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 14 CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	70	56	7	7	204	42	162	175
Blacktown CD	70	49	9	12	168	50	118	156
Manly United FC	70	37	11	22	123	90	33	122
Sydney United	70	34	7	29	108	99	9	109
Parramatta FC	70	30	10	30	109	113	-4	100
St George Saints	70	27	15	28	107	102	5	96
Wollongong Wolves	64	26	14	24	80	100	-20	92
Sydney Olympic	70	22	18	30	82	98	-16	84
Sutherland Shire	70	20	20	30	96	102	-6	80
Bankstown City Lions	69	21	15	33	86	114	-28	78
Penrith Nepean Utd	65	22	12	31	74	114	-40	78
Gladesville Spirit	70	21	9	40	89	136	-47	72
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	70	18	9	43	66	152	-86	63
Schofields Scorpions	70	15	16	39	88	168	-80	61

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 12

GRADE 13: Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0 Granville Rage 0, Canterbury Bankstown 3 Dulwich Hill 0, Hills United 1 Central Coast Lightning 1, Sydney Wanderers FC 5 Southern NSW 0, Macarthur Rams 1 Fraser Park 1, Northern Tigers 2 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 0.

GRADE 14: Bonnyrigg White Eagles 5 Granville Rage 0, Canterbury Bankstown 2 Dulwich Hill 0, Hills United 0 Central Coast Lightning 2, Sydney Wanderers FC 1 Southern NSW 0, Macarthur Rams 2 Fraser Park 0, Northern Tigers 1 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 0.

GRADE 15: Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1 Granville Rage 1, Canterbury Bankstown 1 Dulwich Hill 5, Hills United 0 Central Coast Lightning 0, Sydney Wanderers FC 0 Southern NSW 3, Macarthur Rams 4 Fraser Park 2, Northern Tigers 1 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 4.

GRADE 16: Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0 Granville Rage 1, Canterbury Bankstown 2 Dulwich Hill 1, Hills United 1 Central Coast Lightning 2, Sydney Wanderers FC 1 Southern NSW 0, Macarthur Rams 2 Fraser Park 1, Northern Tigers 0 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 1.

GRADE 18: Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1 Granville Rage 3, Canterbury Bankstown 1 Dulwich Hill 2, Hills United 3 Central Coast Lightning 0, Sydney Wanderers FC 3 Southern NSW 0, Macarthur Rams 1 Fraser Park 0, Northern Tigers 0 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 4.

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 12 GRADE 13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Sydney Wanderers	12	10	2	0	34	9	25	32
Granville Rage	12	6	5	1	21	8	13	23
Central Coast Lightning	12	6	3	3	18	10	8	21
Canterbury Bankstown	12	6	2	4	19	16	3	20
Fraser Park	12	5	4	3	22	15	7	19
Bonnyrigg WE	12	4	5	3	18	18	0	17
Northern Tigers	12	4	4	4	16	12	4	16
Hills United	12	3	4	5	15	21	-6	13
Southern NSW	12	3	3	6	11	21	-10	12
Dulwich Hill	12	3	3	6	7	17	-10	12
Macarthur Rams	12	2	4	6	14	24	-10	10
Mt Druitt Town	12	0	1	11	5	29	-24	1

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 12 GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Macarthur Rams	12	10	2	0	41	7	34	32
Fraser Park	12	8	0	4	21	13	8	24
Bonnyrigg WE	12	7	1	4	26	14	12	22
Dulwich Hill	12	7	0	5	21	12	9	21
Canterbury Bankstown	12	6	3	3	19	13	6	21
Central Coast Lightning	12	6	2	4	17	13	4	20
Southern NSW	12	5	4	3	14	6	8	19
Granville Rage	12	5	3	4	17	24	-7	18
Northern Tigers	12	4	0	8	12	25	-13	12
Hills United	12	2	3	7	13	30	-17	9
Sydney Wanderers	12	2	1	9	10	22	-12	7
Mt Druitt Town	12	0	1	11	3	35	-32	1

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 12 GRADE 15

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Central Coast Lightning	12	9	2	1	26	6	20	29
Mt Druitt Town	12	6	4	2	20	6	14	22
Dulwich Hill	12	6	2	4	16	16	0	20
Hills United	12	5	4	3	13	6	7	19
Macarthur Rams	12	5	4	3	18	12	6	19
Sydney Wanderers	12	5	4	3	15	13	2	19
Southern NSW	12	4	2	6	16	20	-4	14
Bonnyrigg WE	12	3	4	5	12	13	-1	13
Granville Rage	12	3	4	5	12	16	-4	13
Fraser Park	12	4	1	7	15	24	-9	13
Northern Tigers	12	3	2	7	10	21	-11	11
Canterbury Bankstown	12	1	3	8	7	27	-20	6

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 12 GRADE 16

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Dulwich Hill	12	8	2	2	24	11	13	26
Central Coast Lightning	12	6	4	2	20	12	8	22
Northern Tigers	12	7	1	4	17	13	4	22
Canterbury Bankstown	12	7	1	4	16	15	1	22
Macarthur Rams	12	7	1	4	15	14	1	22
Sydney Wanderers	12	7	0	5	25	19	6	21
Bonnyrigg WE	12	6	2	4	15	13	2	20
Hills United	12	5	0	7	17	17	0	15
Granville Rage	12	4	2	6	12	19	-7	14
Mt Druitt Town	12	3	3	6	12	19	-7	12
Fraser Park	12	1	2	9	7	16	-9	5
Southern NSW	12	1	2	9	10	22	-12	5

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 12 GRADE 18

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Sydney Wanderers	12	7	3	2	19	7	12	24
Dulwich Hill	12	7	3	2	24	17	7	24
Hills United	12	7	2	3	32	17	15	23
Bonnyrigg WE	12	7	1	4	36	21	15	22
Canterbury Bankstown	12	6	3	3	30	24	6	21
Northern Tigers	12	5	4	3	26	20	6	19
Macarthur Rams	12	5	3	4	27	23	4	18
Southern NSW	12	4	4	4	23	28	-5	16
Fraser Park	12	4	2	6	20	29	-9	14
Granville Rage	12	3	2	7	16	27	-11	11
Mt Druitt Town	12	2	2	8	15	29	-14	8
Central Coast Lightning	12	0	1	11	10	36	-26	1

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 12 CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Sydney Wanderers	60	31	10	19	103	70	33	103
Dulwich Hill	60	31	10	19	92	73	19	103
Macarthur Rams	60	29	14	17	115	80	35	101
Bonnyrigg WE	60	27	13	20	107	79	28	94
Central Coast Lightning	60	27	12	21	91	77	14	93
Canterbury Bankstown	60	26	12	22	91	95	-4	90
Northern Tigers	60	23	11	26	81	91	-10	80
Hills United	60	22	13	25	90	91	-1	79
Granville Rage	60	21	16	23	78	94	-16	79
Fraser Park	60	22	9	29	85	97	-12	75
Southern NSW	60	17	15	28	74	97	-23	66
Mt Druitt Town	60	11	11	38	55	118	-63	44

DEVELOPMENT YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 12

GRADE 13: Belmore Hercules 0 Blacktown Spartans 2, Sydney University 2 Bathurst 75 Western Demons 3, Hurstville City Minotaurs 1 Camden Tigers 2, Ryde City 2 Rockdale City Suns 1.

GRADE 14: Belmore Hercules 0 Blacktown Spartans 2, Sydney University 0 Bathurst 75 Western Demons 3, Hurstville City Minotaurs 1 Camden Tigers 2, Ryde City 0 Rockdale City Suns 2.

GRADE 15: Belmore Hercules 3 Blacktown Spartans 3, Sydney University 0 Bathurst 75 Western Demons 3, Hurstville City Minotaurs 0 Camden Tigers 1, Ryde City 0 Rockdale City Suns 0.

GRADE 16: Belmore Hercules 2 Blacktown Spartans 0, Sydney University 1 Bathurst 75 Western Demons 4, Hurstville City Minotaurs 2 Camden Tigers 3, Ryde City 0 Rockdale City Suns 2.

DEVELOPMENT YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 12 GRADE 13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Bathurst '75	12	9	2	1	25	12	13	29
Ryde City	12	8	1	3	24	12	12	25
Blacktown Spartans	12	7	1	4	22	14	8	22
Rockdale City Suns	12	5	2	5	22	17	5	17
Camden Tigers	12	4	1	7	14	20	-6	13
Hurstville City Min	12	2	4	6	9	13	-4	10
Belmore Hercules	12	2	4	6	9	22	-13	10
Sydney University	12	3	1	8	17	32	-15	10

DEVELOPMENT YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 12 GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Bathurst '75	12	11	1	0	32	3	29	34
Hurstville City Min	12	4	4	4	14	16	-2	16
Rockdale City Suns	12	3	6	3	10	11	-1	15
Blacktown Spartans	12	4	2	6	14	16	-2	14
Sydney University	12	3	5	4	7	11	-4	14
Belmore Hercules	12	2	6	4	11	16	-5	12
Ryde City	12	3	3	6	8	13	-5	12
Camden Tigers	12	3	3	6	8	18	-10	12

DEVELOPMENT YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 12 GRADE 15

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Bathurst '75	12	10	2	0	33	9	24	32
Ryde City	12	8	3	1	23	5	18	27
Camden Tigers	12	7	0	5	20	15	5	21
Rockdale City Suns	12	5	2	5	12	11	1	17
Blacktown Spartans	12	4	3	5	18	22	-4	15
Sydney University	12	4	3	5	10	15	-5	15
Hurstville City Min	12	1	3	8	15	25	-10	6
Belmore Hercules	12	0	2	10	10	39	-29	2

DEVELOPMENT YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 12 GRADE 16

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Belmore Hercules	12	10	0	2	20	8	12	30
Bathurst '75	12	8	4	0	25	4	21	28
Blacktown Spartans	12	5	3	4	11	11	0	18
Camden Tigers	12	5	2	5	16	14	2	17
Ryde City	12	5	2	5	16	19	-3	17
Sydney University	12	3	1	8	13	18	-5	10
Rockdale City Suns	12	3	0	9	14	23	-9	9
Hurstville City Min	12	2	2	8	12	30	-18	8

attack METROPOLITAN LEAGUE: ROUND 12

NORTHERN CONFERENCE

GRADE 11: Blacktown Association 1 Manly Warringah Association 0, Granville Association 1 Nepean Association 0, Gladesville Hornsby Association 5 Ku-ring-gai Association 0, Eastern Suburbs Association 3 Central Coast Association 3.

GRADE 12: Blacktown Association 2 Manly Warringah Association 0, Granville Association 0 Nepean Association 0, Gladesville Hornsby Association 0 Ku-ring-gai Association 1, Eastern Suburbs Association 1 Central Coast Association 0.

SOUTHERN CONFERENCE:

GRADE 11: Southern Districts 0 St George Association 0, Macarthur Association 0 Illawarra Association 0, Bankstown Association 0 Sutherland Association 5, Southern Branch 0 Canterbury Association 4.

GRADE 12: Southern Districts 2 St George Association 0, Macarthur Association 1 Illawarra Association 0, Bankstown Association 0 Sutherland Association 1, Southern Branch 0 Canterbury Association 2.

attack METROPOLITAN LEAGUE: ROUND 12 GRADE 11 NORTHERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Gladesville-Hornsby	12	7	3	2	35	17	18	24
Manly Warringah Asso	12	7	2	3	25	13	12	23
Eastern Suburbs Asso	12	5	5	2	28	20	8	20
Granville Association	12	5	3	4	17	20	-3	18
Central Coast Asso	12	3	5	4	16	19	-3	14
Nepean Association	11	4	1	6	12	19	-7	13
Blacktown Association	12	3	3	6	12	15	-3	12
Ku-Ring-Gai Asso	11	1	2	8	6	28	-22	5

attack METROPOLITAN LEAGUE: ROUND 12 GRADE 11 SOUTHERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Sutherland Association	12	10	1	1	39	5	34	31
Southern Districts Asso	12	9	3	0	27	4	23	30
Illawarra Association	12	5	4	3	20	18	2	19
Canterbury Association	12	5	2	5	18	10	8	17
St George Association	12	4	4	4	20	22	-2	16
Macarthur Association	12	4	3	5	15	14	1	15
Bankstown Association	12	1	1	10	9	34	-25	4
Southern Branch	12	0	2	10	1	42	-41	2

attack METROPOLITAN LEAGUE: ROUND 12 GRADE 12 NORTHERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Blacktown Association	12	10	1	1	31	5	26	31
Nepean Association	11	8	2	1	28	9	19	26
Granville Association	12	8	2	2	25	8	17	26
Manly Warringah Asso	12	4	2	6	19	22	-3	14
Gladesville-Hornsby	12	4	1	7	9	20	-11	13
Ku-Ring-Gai Asso	11	4	0	7	12	15	-3	12
Eastern Suburbs Asso	12	3	0	9	6	28	-22	9
Central Coast Asso	12	2	0	10	9	32	-23	6

attack METROPOLITAN LEAGUE: ROUND 12 GRADE 12 SOUTHERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Sutherland Association	12	9	3	0	25	6	19	30
Macarthur Association	12	9	2	1	22	8	14	29
St George Association	12	6	1	5	22	16	6	19
Bankstown Association	12	5	3	4	16	10	6	18
Southern Districts Asso	12	5	2	5	16	17	-1	17
Illawarra Association	12	3	5	4	9	11	-2	14
Canterbury Association	12	1	2	9	4	20	-16	5
Southern Branch	12	1	0	11	6	32	-26	3

2006 WINTER SUPER LEAGUE WRAP

Rockdale nail another win

By Paul Goodwin

Leaders Rockdale City Suns picked up maximum points against Sydney Wanderers with a 3-0 win at the Rockdale Ilinden Sports Centre on Sunday.

Chris Cop grabbed the first with a nice finish in the opening minute and when Pece Zaikovski made it 2-0 in the sixth minute it was going to be a very hard road home for the Wanderers.

Zaikovski managed to make it 3-0 by the 76th to keep his Sunsí side atop the table, with second-placed Bonnyrigg set to play their catch-up game on Wednesday night at Central Coast.

FC Bossy Liverpool, who drew with Bonnyrigg 0-0 midweek, went down 1-0 to Granville Rage at Ernie Smith Reserve on Sunday.

Rage had appeared to be in something of a form slump, but they dug deep and a gamble by coach Ricky Budini bore impressive returns.

Bossy looked to be on the improve so when Budini threw on the injured Kris Holbrook from the bench it looked like an increasingly desperate move from a team which has struggled to score.

But Holbrook produced the goods, scoring a nice header from a Daniel Willoughby free kick in the 75th minute.

Holbrook's reward was to be put back in cotton wool, with a return to the bench for the closing stages of the game.

Sunday also saw Dulwich Hill looking for their first win under new coach Paul Carter when the strong Penrith Nepean United team came to Arlington Oval.

Penrith, coming off a great home win over Rockdale the previous Saturday night, went on with the job with a convincing 2-0 win.

In the 18th minute a low cross from the right by Stewart Van Bentum eluded every defender in the goalmouth and was driven home at the far post by Penrithís new attacking weapon, Ben Burrows.

Penrith controlled the game throughout the first half and after going close again a number of times made it 2-0 in the 41st minute.

This time Ben Wright got the ball over from the right and Danny Wells was able to put away a far post header, further embarrassing the out of touch Dulwich defence.

The second half saw Dulwich attacking constantly without really threatening as Paul Wearne and his men took a stranglehold on the game. Dulwich keeper Roy Bell made several reflex saves late in the game as Penrith caught the home side on a few counter attacks.

Meanwhile, Fraser Park FC led Sydney University 1-0 at Fraser Park, until the 89th minute when the Students grabbed a late equaliser.

Fraser took the lead through Alex Leris in the 74th but Tom Corte bobbed up with the vital levelling goal just as The Dragonsí fans were hailing their teamís first win in weeks.

On Saturday afternoon Canterbury Bankstown Berries and Fairfield City Lions shared an exciting 2-2 draw at the Dunc Gray Velodrome.

The Berries led twice through penalties put away by Nick Polimenakos after handballs in the box, the first after only 30 seconds, but each time the Lions fought back.

Bill Sevinc finished off a smart move just five minutes in and after Canterbury scored their second penalty in the 22nd having controlled most of the first half, Fairfield got right on top after the break.

Robbie Younis slotted home in the 55th after an exchange of passes with Sevinc but both teams missed great chances to wrap up the win.

Bonnyrigg returned home to pick up another valuable win in their title quest, but they did it at the cost of losing gifted striker, Dalibor Drca, to a shattered leg after an unfortunate collision with the St George keeper in the 65th minute.

The game was held up for half an hour while the stricken player was attended to by paramedics and taken to Liverpool hospital.

Bonnyrigg wound up 3-2 winners in a seesawing match.

After Bonnyrigg had led from a direct free kick by Ivan Vojvodic in the fifth minute, the Saints levelled two minutes before the break when player-coach, Vince Śavoca, making his debut for the season, lashed the ball home inside the goalmouth.

The White Eagles levelled again in the 64th when Joe Bruniís excellent cross from the left was nodded home at the far post by Daniel Cortez-Pando, but Paul Bilokapic claimed an equaliser for St George in the 81st from a low, acute angled shot.

Three minutes from time some intense Bonnyrigg pressure led to Matthew Mayora slamming home after a frantic scramble in the goalmouth, sealing the narrow win and keeping Bonnyrigg right in the title race.

Central Coast Lightning were shocked by Stanmore Hawks at Pluim Park, going down 5-1 with Neil Philippou, in a rich vein of scoring form these days, getting a hat trick for the Hawks.

Philippou got there first when the ball had not been cleared from a tenth minute free kick and the Hawks led 1-0 at the break.

John Pieris then set up substitute David James for the second in the 64th and John Fotiadis added a third as the visitors raced to a handy lead, with Philippou grabbing two more, Matt Simonís 79th minute strike for the Coast team doing little more than restore some pride.

The win keeps Stanmore's semi-finals hopes alive.

Finally, Macarthur Rams went down 1-0 to top five aspirants, Northern Tigers, at Lynwood Park.

Daniel Mittiga got his head to a fine cross from the right by talented wingman Paul Davies in the 24th minute and that was the end of The Rams, who have struggled all year.

LEADING GOALSCORERS

12 Sash Tirovski (RCS),
11 Neil Philippou (SH),
9 Robert Younis (FCL), Nick Polimenakos (CBB),
8 James Kovas (SG), Kris Holbrook (GR)

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE FIRST GRADE ROUND 13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Rockdale City Suns	**13**	**10**	**1**	**2**	**32**	**16**	**16**	**31**
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	12	8	4	0	24	13	11	28
Penrith Nepean United	13	7	4	2	15	9	6	25
Northern Tigers	13	6	4	3	17	12	5	22
Stanmore Hawks	13	6	3	4	24	12	12	21
Granville Rage	13	6	3	4	18	14	4	21
Fairfield City Lions	13	6	3	4	26	23	3	21
St George Saints	13	5	4	4	23	20	3	19
FC Bossy Liverpool	13	5	4	4	20	19	1	19
Central Coast Lightning	12	5	1	6	17	20	-3	16
Canterbury B'town Berries	13	3	5	5	26	23	3	14
Sydney University	13	2	6	5	15	21	-6	12
Fraser Park FC	13	3	3	7	18	29	-11	12
Macarthur Rams	13	2	4	7	10	27	-17	10
Dulwich Hill	13	1	4	8	15	25	-10	7
Sydney Wanderers	13	0	3	10	6	23	-17	3

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE GRADE 20 ROUND 13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Sydney University	**13**	**12**	**0**	**1**	**37**	**8**	**29**	**36**
Sydney Wanderers	13	7	4	2	23	13	10	25
FC Bossy Liverpool	13	7	2	4	19	12	7	23
St George Saints	13	6	3	4	28	20	8	21
Central Coast Lightning	13	6	3	4	26	20	6	21
Dulwich Hill	12	6	3	3	22	18	4	21
Macarthur Rams	13	6	2	5	27	24	3	20
Penrith Nepean United	13	5	4	4	22	22	0	19
Stanmore Hawks	13	5	3	5	19	13	6	18
Canterbury B'town Berries	13	5	1	7	20	25	-5	16
Rockdale City Suns	12	4	1	7	17	26	-9	13
Fraser Park FC	13	3	4	6	11	25	-14	13
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	13	3	3	7	20	27	-7	12
Fairfield City Lions	13	3	3	7	18	30	-12	12
Northern Tigers	13	2	4	7	12	28	-16	10
Granville Rage	13	1	4	8	16	26	-10	7

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE FIXTURES ROUND 14

Saturday 3rd June

Fairfield City Lions	FC Bossy Liverpool	Norford Park	6:00pm
Granville Rage	Rockdale City Suns	Garside Park	7:30pm
Sydney Wanderers	Dulwich Hill	Hajduk Stadium	7:30pm
Penrith Nepean United	Fraser Park FC	Cook Park (St Marys)	7:30pm

Sunday 4th June

Northern Tigers	Central Coast Lightning	Parklands Oval	3:00pm
Stanmore Hawks	Bonnyrigg White Eagles	Arlington Oval	3:00pm
St George Saints	Canterbury B'town Berries	St George Stadium	3:00pm
Sydney University	Macarthur Rams	Sydney Uni Oval No.1	3:00pm

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE RESULTS ROUND 13

FIRST GRADE: **Central Coast Lightning 1** (M Simon 79') **Stanmore Hawks 5** (N Philippou 10'/37'/41', J Pieris 29', J Fotiadis 30'), **Bonnyrigg White Eagles 3** (I Vojvodic 4', D Cortez Pando 63', M Mayora 87') **St George Saints 2** (V Savoca 42', P Bilokapic 80'), **Canterbury Bankstown Berries 2** (N Polimenakos 2'/30') **Fairfield City Lions 2** (B Sevinc 5', R Younis 55'), **Macarthur Rams 0 Northern Tigers 1** (D Mittiga 24'), **FC Bossy Liverpool 0 Granville Rage 1** (K Holbrook 75'), **Rockdale City Suns 3** (C Cop 1', P Zaikovski 6'/76') **Sydney Wanderers FC 0, Dulwich Hill 0 Penrith Nepean United 2** (B Burrows 17', D Wells 41'), **Fraser Park FC 1** (A Leris 74') **Sydney University 1** (T Corte 89').

GRADE 20: **Central Coast Lightning 3 Stanmore Hawks 0, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0 St George Saints 1, Canterbury Bankstown Berries 2 Fairfield City Lions 3, Macarthur Rams 2 Northern Tigers 1, FC Bossy Liverpool 1 Granville Rage 0, Rockdale City Suns 1 Sydney Wanderers FC 1, Dulwich Hill 2 Penrith Nepean United 2, Fraser Park FC 0 Sydney University 5.**

RESCHEDULED GAMES: ROUND 4:

FIRST GRADE: **FC Bossy Liverpool 0 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0.**
GRADE 20: **FC Bossy Liverpool 4 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0.**

Koalas breach University fortress

By Mel Papa

North West Sydney Koalas defeated Sydney University 2-1 at Sydney University Oval on the weekend, ending the home side's impressive unbeaten streak.

In what was an evenly matched game, either side could have taken the points, but the away side's persistence in attack and constant badgering of the Sydney Uni goal was the difference between the two sides.

The Koalas took the lead in the first half through Jess Seaman and it stayed that way early on, with the away side going into the break with a slender one-goal advantage.

The second half was again evenly matched, with plenty of end-to-end action. Both teams were resilient in defence and weren't afraid to venture forward in search of glory.

After some good work on the left wing by Ruby Taylor, a golden opportunity was wasted by North West's Jess Seaman. Minutes later, Danny Salvi forced the Sydney University keeper into a great save after a brilliant turn in the box and well placed shot.

However, Sydney University stole an equaliser in the 60th minute to get back into the game.

A low cross from the left hand side of the park was misjudged by Anna McLean, allowing Angelina Koncurat to slide in and knock the ball past Erin Hunter in the North West goal.

The goal boosted Sydney University, who then began applying more pressure and attacked with more confidence.

Both teams had chances, but neither team could seize control. Danny Salvi wasted a golden opportunity for the away side when she blasted the ball over the bar from right in front.

Both sides had many more second half opportunities to take the game, but it was North West, thanks to their relentless attacking play, who found a winning goal seven minutes from time.

A free kick from outside the area was tipped onto the bar by the Sydney University keeper, allowing Jess Seaman to drill home the rebound and seal the win.

Elsewhere, it was a game of two halves at Peel Park between Gladesville Ravens and Manly United FC, with Manly winning 5-1.

Manly dominated the first half and went into the break with a 4-0 lead.

But the second half saw a rejuvenated Ravens side take the pitch, with the introduction of substitute Fatma Agar having an immediate impact for the home side as she slotted a fine drive past the keeper.

Gladesville pressurised their opponents for the rest of the game, but were unable to put the ball away. After a tough and close second half, Manly sealed their win with a spectacular long range effort.

In other matches, Central Coast Lightning have jumped up to fourth position of the table after their emphatic 13-0 home victory over the Northern Tigers, making it two consecutive high-scoring wins for Central Coast in as many weeks.

Second placed Illawarra defeated Penrith Nepean 4-1, while competition leaders Marconi were victorious yet again, disposing of UNSW 5-1.

Southern Branch had no problems against Blacktown with a convincing 8-1 win, while things weren't as easy at St George Stadium with the home side only just defeating Bathurst 3-2.

Sutherland picked up their third consecutive win at Lynwood Park, beating Macarthur Rams 1-0.

North West Sydney's two-goal hero Jess Seaman shields the ball

Arrive alive NSW WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE

aArrive alive
WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE: ROUND 12
FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	11	10	1	0	54	10	44	31
Illawarra Stingrays	11	8	1	2	52	10	42	25
Manly United FC	11	7	1	3	53	18	35	22
Central Coast Lightning	11	6	3	2	41	12	29	21
Sydney University	11	6	2	3	31	18	13	20
Macarthur Rams	11	6	1	4	23	19	4	19
NW Sydney Koalas	11	5	3	3	25	9	16	18
Penrith Nepean United	11	5	2	4	29	19	10	17
Sutherland Sharks	11	5	2	4	16	15	1	17
Bathurst City	11	5	1	5	25	15	10	16
St George FC	11	5	0	6	24	34	-10	15
UNSW	11	4	2	5	28	19	9	14
Gladesville Ravens	11	4	0	7	20	23	-3	12
Southern Branch	11	2	1	8	23	48	-25	7
Blacktown Spartans	11	0	0	11	2	82	-80	0
Northern Tigers	11	0	0	11	0	95	-95	0

Arrive alive
WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE: ROUND 12
GRADE 21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Central Coast Lightning	11	10	1	0	52	12	40	31
Marconi Stallions	11	10	0	1	54	3	51	30
Manly United FC	11	8	2	1	40	14	26	26
NW Sydney Koalas	11	8	2	1	30	7	23	26
Penrith Nepean United	11	7	2	2	38	10	28	23
Sutherland Sharks	11	7	2	2	30	9	21	23
Illawarra Stingrays	11	4	3	4	18	24	-6	15
Bathurst City	11	4	2	5	18	21	-3	14
Blacktown Spartans	11	4	1	6	13	25	-12	13
Sydney University	11	3	3	5	17	21	-4	12
Macarthur Rams	11	3	3	5	18	31	-13	12
Northern Tigers	11	3	0	8	16	47	-31	9
Southern Branch	11	2	2	7	18	29	-11	8
St George FC	11	2	0	9	9	37	-28	6
UNSW	11	0	2	9	5	38	-33	2
Gladesville Ravens	11	0	1	10	8	56	-48	1

Arrive alive
WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE: ROUND 12

FIRST GRADE: Southern Branch 8 (S Pugh 3/18/55m K Clarke 10/26/70m K French 37m K Meehan 81m) Blacktown Spartans 1 (E Shirt 84m), Central Coast Lightning 13 (K Pearce 2/12/21m G Blanch 4/30/51/83m K Warren 45m S Hudson 51m J Hedge 60m R Hartley 70/72m S Hockey 88m) Northern Tigers 0, St George FC 3 (M Toumbelekis 23m C Arnold 66m K Halaska 83m) Bathurst City 2 (G Rosconi 10/56m), Illawarra Stingrays 4 (M Carney x 1 H Kerrigan x 1pen J Cooper x 2) Penrith Nepean United 1 (N Laws x 1), Sydney University 1 (A Koncurat 60m) NWS Koalas 2 (J Seaman 7m S De Francesco 83m), Gladesville Ravens 1 (F Agar x 1) Manly United FC 5 (E Bates x 1 A Nakao x 1 K Hensman x 2 T Leggett x 1), UNSW 2 (A Smith 44m S Choucair 52m) Marconi Stallions 3 (A Cavanagh 31/41/76m), Macarthur Rams 0 Sutherland Sharks 1 (N Spirovski 88m).

GRADE 21: Southern Branch 0 Blacktown Spartans 2, Central Coast Lightning 8 Northern Tigers 2, St George FC 1 Bathurst City 4, Illawarra Stingrays 1 Penrith Nepean United 6, Sydney University 0 NWS Koalas 2, Gladesville Ravens 1 Manly United FC 3, UNSW 0 Marconi Stallions 1, Macarthur Rams 1 Sutherland Sharks 5.

SOCCER NSW FUTSAL

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The Soccer NSW Futsal Department is seeking Expressions of Interest from Clubs who wish to participate in the 2006/07 Soccer NSW Premier Futsal League.

The Competition will be held on Saturday afternoon and nights commencing, September 06 until completion in February 07.

Clubs will be required to field teams in the following age categories:

- 12 Yr Boys
- 14 Yr Boys
- 16 Yr Boys
- Youth (19 Years) Men
- Open Men
- 13 Yr Girls
- 16 Yr Girls
- Open Women

For further information please contact
Soccer NSW Futsal Department on (02) 814 4464 or Email
futsal@soccernsw.com.au <mailto:futsal@soccernsw.com.au>

Applications close Saturday June 3rd 2006

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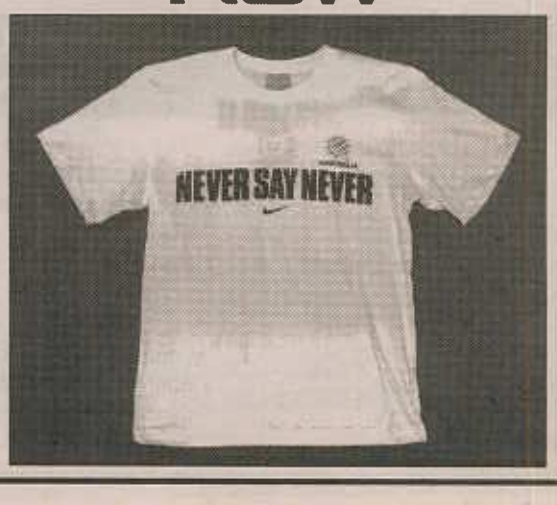

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WORLD CUP NEWS

Thank you for the music

Courtesy fifa.com

A five-man band from Sydney, Freedom of Thought were the winners of a contest organised by Australian broadcaster SBS to find Australia's official Germany 2006 song, and speaking ahead of their big night before a 95,000 capacity crowd, they declared: "Both music and sport are art forms. They compliment each other because of the passion in both."

Music and football certainly have a long (and occasionally harmonious) history together and the Australian anthem is continuing a tradition of FIFA World Cup songs – official or otherwise - that dates back four decades to the 1966 finals in England. That year's tournament song was named after its mascot, a friendly lion called 'World Cup Willie'.

Music is such an integral feature of the modern-day FIFA World Cup that one song is no longer enough. Forty years on and another lion, the Germany 2006 mascot GOLEO VI, has his own album. Before a ball has even been kicked at the tournament, GOLEO has scored a No.1 hit with his first single from the album, 'Love Generation', recorded with Bob Sinclar.

That is just the tip of the iceberg. This year's tournament will bring us both an official song, 'Time of Our Lives' by singing quartet Il Divo and Toni Braxton, and an official anthem, 'Celebrate the Day', performed by German artist Herbert Gronemyer and the west African duo Amadou and Mariam.

A further number, Shakira's 'Hips don't Lie' will also feature on the official tournament album, Voices, and will be performed by the Colombian singer at the FIFA World Cup final. The presence of such artists maintains the recent pattern of involving high-profile performers, like Anastacia ('Boom', Korea/Japan 2002) and Ricky Martin ('La Copa de la Vida', France 98).

For many fans, it is their own teams' anthems that capture the imagination. This year's offerings include Embrace's England song 'World At Your Feet', and Maximus Dan's 'Fighter' for Trinidad and Tobago. Looking back in time, though, it is songs by the teams themselves that often stick in the mind.

The West Germany team displayed their familiarity with the Spanish phrasebook for three tournaments running when recording songs for Argentina 78 ('*Buenos dias, Argentina*'), Spain 82 ('*Olé España*') and Mexico 86 ('*Mexico, mi amor*'). For USA 94, they turned to English for 'Far Away in America', recorded with the Village People.

England fans remember fondly their 1982 squad's song 'This Time (We'll Get It Right)'. Of course, they are still waiting for that pledge to be realised although, musically at least, their team got it right eight years later when recording the hugely popular 'World in Motion' with New Order – a song featuring a memorable rap from John Barnes.

Barnes is not the only FIFA World Cup star to try his luck in the recording studio. In his pomp, the legendary Pele recorded several songs with Brazilian artist Elis Regina, while prior to Spain 82, Brazil left-back Junior enjoyed a hit with 'Voa canarinho, voa' (Fly canary, fly).

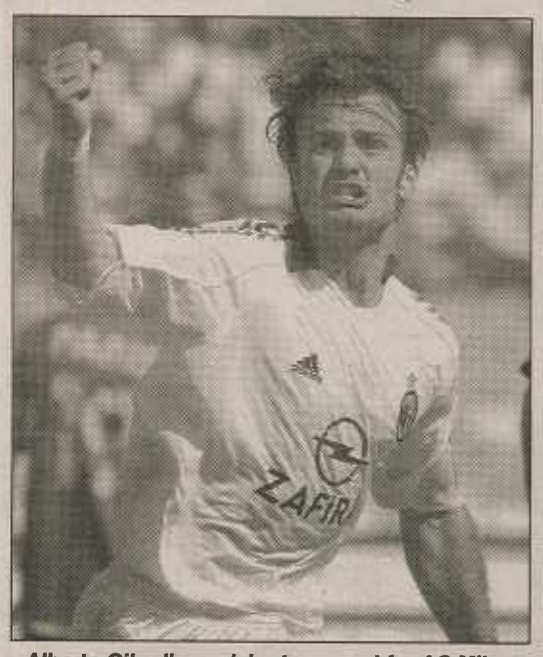
Today Brazilian fans still sing the song for the 1970 finals, whose chorus runs: "*Pra Frente Brasil, Salve a Seleção*" (Go on Brazil, Hail the *Seleção*). Of course, a triumphal tone is acceptable when you are Brazilian but Scottish fans, for instance, cringe with embarrassment when they recall some of their teams' FIFA World Cup tunes.

'Easy, easy' was hardly appropriate for a team eliminated in the first round in 1974 and the Scots suffered the same fate in 1978, despite Rod Stewart's claim in 'Ole, ola' that: "We're gonna bring that World Cup back from over there." The Scots learnt their lesson eventually and by France 98 their anthem simply pleaded: "Don't come home too soon."

There are no wild promises from Down Under as Australia prepare for their first FIFA World Cup in 32 years.

Instead, Freedom of Thought have set out to capture the excitement of the Australians' return to the world stage: "I wanna jump and scream/ In a stadium full of Australians/Wearing my green and gold." At the Socceroos' send-off on Thursday night, nobody is going to argue with those sentiments.

Gilardino looking forward to World Cup



Alberto Gilardino celebrates a goal for AC Milan. The twenty-three year-old striker will be looking to celebrate many times vesting the Azzurri jersey in Germany.

Alberto Gilardino is raring to go in sight of Italy's opening match at the World Cup on June 12th against Ghana.

Alberto Gilardino defended Italy from Franz Beckenbauer's attack that the Azzurri would pay psychologically for the corruption-scandal that has erupted in Italy over the past weeks.

"He should think about his Germany, and we shall think of playing with nothing to hide."

The former Parma striker is looking forward to the upcoming World Cup, his first major International tournament.

"Among us there is a lot of expectation and will to do well. We can't wait to play and give our best for this shirt.

"Lippi called-up those who deserved it. Pippo (Inzaghi) this year returned to do great things and deserved the call-up. Luca is a formidable player, an important added value for the national team."

Gilardino could prove a lucky charm for the Azzurri, as the 23 year-old striker was born on the 5th of July 1982, the same historic day when Italy defeated Brazil in the Spanish World Cup, which the national team then went on to win.

Salgado in World Cup scare

Real Madrid and Spain right back Michel Salgado suffered a hamstring injury in training late last week, which could rule him out of the World Cup.

The full back picked up the injury while doing the usual stretching exercises, and had to withdraw immediately.

He was inspected by team doctor Genaro Borrás, who confirmed that it looked like a strong (muscle) pull. He was hopeful it would be nothing serious, but mentioned that a tear, if confirmed, could rule him out of the World Cup.

However, the Spanish team doctor said everyone would have to wait for a couple of days to find out about the extent of the injury, as scans would only be carried out following two days of rest.

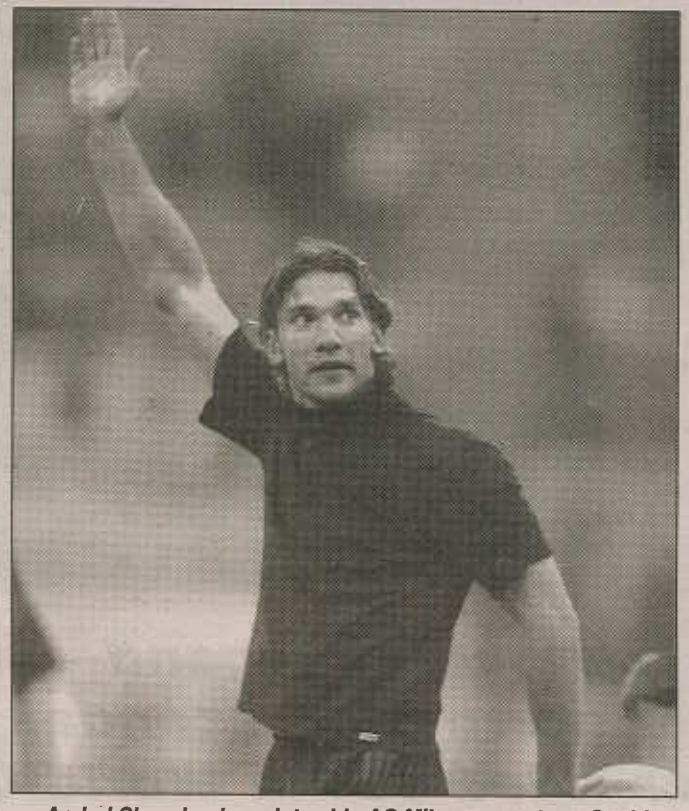
"The tests which will determine if it is just a strong blow or a tear, will be carried out after two days, because they will be more accurate after 48 hours.

"My impression is that there is no serious damage, nothing that should not heal in five days."

However, doubts continue to persist, as the injury is of similar nature, and in the exact spain spot as the one that ruled him out of the 2004 European Championships.

Salgado himself is reported to be very pessimistic, as he is said to be experiencing pains very similar to four years ago.

Sheva's World Cup fitness battle



Andrei Shevchenko salutes his AC Milan supporters. Could Sheva be leaving Milan and headed to London to join Chelsea?

Andrei Shevchenko's presence at the World Cup in Germany is not at all guaranteed. The Ukranian International must await reports from his Milan doctors before word on whether he will feature in Ukraine's opening World Cup fixtures can be confirmed.

And this is the start of a crucial period for the 29-year-old Milan striker, as he had earlier promised the Rossoneri a decision on his future by no later than Thursday, 25th May as Chelsea continue to press for the Ukraine captain's signature.

Shevchenko injured his knee earlier this month in a game against Parma and has struggled to regain fitness, but he was named in the Ukraine squad despite the problem. How could they leave him out? Ukraine have already lost key defender Sergiy Fedoro through a hip injury that will require at least three months to heal, and goalkeeper Oleksandr Shovkovsky is still fighting to overcome a lingering neck problem.

"My health is improving with each passing day," said Shevchenko.

"I cannot push my treatment forward too quickly.

"Doctors will examine me and things will become clear on my hopes for the World Cup".

Meanwhile Chelsea have been keeping up the pressure on the Rossoneri for the acquisition of the strikers signature, but Milan remain understandably eager to keep him. They recently tabled a lucrative 2 year extension to his current contract and published this statement on the Milan website:

'Shevchenko's future is at the heart of every Milan fan and it's for this very reason that Milan have proposed to Andriy a contract extension until 2011.'

One thing is certain. His presence will be sorely missed if he fails to make the hoped for recovery. Last season he was Milan's top scorer with 19 goals in 28 league appearances and also bagged 9 Champions League goals.

Ukraine have warm-up matches against Costa Rica- 28th May, Italy - June 2nd, Libya - June 5th and Luxembourg - June 8th before their opening Group H match against Spain on June 14th.

WORLD NEWS

World Cup curse for Golden Ball winners

If history is anything to go by, luck seems to always run out for teams that have the Golden Ball winners on their side.

None of the winners of the Golden Ball award have seen their countries go on to win the World Cup, ever since the award's inception in 1956.

Some may say it is just a coincident, though for others, it may truly be something more.

There have been twelve editions of the World Cup since 1956. Of the ten times that the Golden Ball winner's nation has participated in it, no less than five have ended in traumatic final defeats for the respective countries.

Five Final Losses

The first of the five final losses came in 1970, when reigning Golden Ball winner Gianni Rivera (AC Milan) saw his Italian side routed 4-1 by Brazil in the final.

History repeated itself four years later. It was Johann Cruyff's turn to bring bad luck to the Dutchmen, one of the favourites for the competition. They made it to the final too, but were pipped to the post by West Germany (2-1), who had (luckily?) seen both Gerd Müller (3rd) and Franz Beckenbauer (4th) lose out to Cruyff.

A fat chance the West Germans had in 1982, then, after Karl-Heinze Rummenigge (Bayern Munich) won the Ball, and was followed home my compatriots Paul Breitner (2nd) and Bernd Schuster (3rd). They were duly hammered 3-1 by the Italians in the final.

Then there was 1994, perhaps the year when lady luck evaded the Golden Ball winner in the worst possible way. Rewind to that dramatic final between Brazil and Italy, which the South Americans won 3-2 on penalties after Roberto Baggio skewed his chance. Now take one guess who won the Golden Boot in 1993!

For those who didn't get it, it was none other than Baggio.

Fast forward four years to 1998. Brazil were the big pre-tournament favourites, and made it to the final against France. However, they were duly mauled 3-0. Ronaldo had won the Golden Ball in 1997 after scoring 34 League goals for Barcelona.

If that was not enough, France had been led by some superb displays from Zidane, who had been one of the favourites for the individual award himself, following a Serie A and a Champions League final with Juventus. Thankfully for France, he had eventually finished third.

Former Poland coach Gorski dies aged 85

Former Poland coach Kazimierz Gorski, who led the country to a third-place finish at the 1974 FIFA World Cup and Olympic gold, has died at the age of 85, PAP news agency reported on Tuesday.

Born in Lviv, now in Ukraine, Gorski coached the national team from 1970-76, overseeing the golden era of Polish football that produced players like Kazimierz Dejna, Grzegorz Lato, Robert Gadocha and Wlodzimierz Lubanski.

"I don't think I am offending anyone by saying that he was the Pope of Polish football," said former goalkeeper Jan Tomaszewski, whose heroic saves against England at Wembley took Gorski's team to the 1974 FIFA World Cup.

"He was a second father to me. For what we achieved with him, he will live in my heart forever," Tomaszewski told Reuters.

Zico thanks Japanese fans

Japan coach Zico said thank you to the thousands of people who have been and are still going to Fukushima Prefecture to watch the national team go through their paces in the training camp.

Over the course of last week, 23,000 people flocked to the small town of Naraha to take a look at the Asian Champions before they left for Europe on Friday.

"There are people coming from all over the place to show their support here and that is obviously very pleasing and we are grateful," Zico told reporters.

"It makes training feel that extra bit special for the players and more importantly gives them a sense of responsibility."

Japanese National team coach Zico alongside Tsuneyasu Miyamoto during a recent training session in Japan.

Raul: We are going to Germany to win

Spain skipper Raul made it clear to the rest of the world that he had full faith in the national team, and that if they were going to the World Cup, it was only to win.

"There is a lot of expectation in the squad, and we are very motivated to start our training," he said upon his arrival in Las Rozas, where the team will be training before they leave for the World Cup.

"This is a World Cup, which always has surprises, and hopefully one of them is Spain.

"But if we go it is for winning," he declared. "If we didn't feel that way, it would be a waste of time.

"We have the qualities for success, but it is necessary to go one step at a time, with confidence."

Raul also had words of praise for coach Luis Aragones: "The coach has the very clear ideas on what we must do.

"In the practice games, we must all give our best so as to hit peak form."

Speaking about himself, he assured that he was feeling great, having recovered completely from the knee injury suffered in December.

"Despite the injury, I am going to the get to the World Cup in great shape. It can be my last one, and I am very motivated," he added.

The Spanish National team has continually failed to break through and make a big impact at a World Cup tournament, though the calibre of players in the squad does suggest that 2006 could be their time.

Spanish supporters are hoping that 2006 will be there year after continually failing at the World Cup. Raul (bottom, second from right) will captain the team in Germany.

Ronaldinho wants Brazilian glory in Germany

Ronaldinho burst on to the international scene in a 1999 Copa America game against Venezuela when he scored a goal reminiscent of Pele's 1958 famous World Cup final effort.

Two minutes after coming on as a substitute for his second international appearance, the 19-year-old Ronaldinho flicked the ball over a defender, swept past another and fired the ball into the goal between goalkeeper Renny Vega and the near post.

It was clear that Brazil had unearthed another gem.

Seven years on, Ronaldinho is widely acclaimed as the world's best.

No other player has such a wide range of tricks at his disposal and no other player seems to enjoy himself, as illustrated by Ronaldinho's trademark grin.

Yet there is still an underlying feeling in Brazil that something is missing from Ronaldinho's career.

Despite that spectacular goal in 1999 and his presence in the 2002 World Cup winning team, Ronaldinho has yet to perform at his very best for his country on a consistent basis.

There have been flashes of his brilliance but, as often as not, he has failed to meet expectations.

In 2002, for example, he played second fiddle to Rivaldo and Ronaldo and blotted his copybook by being sent off early in the second half of the quarter-final against England shortly after scoring the winning goal.

There is little doubt that his World Player of Year award in 2005 was achieved on the basis of what he did with Barcelona rather than Brazil, even allowing for his display in the Confederations Cup.

It may seem harsh to say that Ronaldinho still has something to prove but the player seems ready to have the last laugh.

His performances for Barca during their march to the Champions League final have been spell-binding, even though he was not at his absolute best in their 2-1 win over Arsenal in the final in Paris on May 17.

Last year he scored one of the greatest goals ever seen in a European tie in England when he rifled home an unstoppable shot against Chelsea in the Champions League at Stamford Bridge.

This season he created a magnificent goal for Ludovic Giuly to score against AC Milan in the Champions League semi-final in Milan.

There is now a huge expectation on him to perform to those high standards in the finals in Germany.

For Brazilians, who have been spoiled by the talents of Pele, Garrincha and Zico in the past, anything other than a great World Cup will be seen as a let-down.

Brazil's Ronaldinho will be hoping to be full of smiles come July 10th in Germany.

WORLD NEWS

Evergreen Cafu on record trail

Courtesy fifa.com

Few players in football history can boast such a successful career as the evergreen AC Milan defender Cafu, and the flying full-back is set to break even more records this summer in Germany.

Having recently recovered from a successful knee operation, the 36-year-old Brazil captain is determined to prove he has lost none of his star quality at the 2006 FIFA World Cup. While failing to attract the sort of attention lavished on Brazil's 'Fab Four' (Kaka, Ronaldinho, Adriano and Ronaldo), he has played a vital role in countless Brazilian victories over the past decade.

With the Auriverde looking to add yet another world crown to their collection this summer, Cafu could seal his place among the all-time greats. Already the most-capped player in Brazilian national team history, Cafu is just two games short of breaking the record number of FIFA World Cup appearances in the famous yellow shirt, currently held by his former colleagues Dunga and Taffarel (18).

Having already won more FIFA World Cup games in Brazil colours than any other player (13), this summer's tournament in Germany could see Cafu equal Pele's record tally of three FIFA World Cup wins (along with Ronaldo, a non-playing substitute at USA 94). The vastly experienced defender could also become the only man to have played in four consecutive FIFA World Cup Finals and the first captain to lift the coveted Trophy twice.

Cafu, with Brazil's opening FIFA World Cup match set to kick off in less than a month's time, how are you feeling physically?

Cafu: Really good. I had some injury problems about three months ago, but I had a successful operation and now I'm back to my best. I'd say that I'm about 98 per cent fit, so by the time the World Cup comes around I should be 100 per cent.

You recently admitted to feeling harshly treated by some sections of the Brazilian press, claiming that they only write about you when you are having problems.

It was just heat of the moment stuff. It's all water under the bridge now.

Do you feel hard done by?

No, not at all.

Does this criticism motivate you?

Definitely. Whenever your professional performance is drawn into question it only serves to motivate you more. While criticism can sometimes make you see things from a negative point of view, it can also be positive.

You have been Brazil's number one right-back for a number of years and remain Carlos Alberto Parreira's first choice. How do you feel about competing for your place with the highly-promising Cicinho?

I think it's great. It's a sign that there are always top players coming out of Brazil. It's fantastic for Brazilian football and of course for the national team.

This tournament could see you breaking a number of records: the most appearances for Brazil in FIFA World Cup history, the first player to play in four FIFA World Cup Finals, and the only captain to lift the Trophy twice. Have you given these records much thought?

To be perfectly honest I have. It would be a great honour to break any of these records, especially if I was the first captain to lift the Trophy twice. Being in this position merely goes to show how much work I've put in throughout my career, any records I break will be the fruit of that hard graft. However, it's vital we remember to take things one step at a time. Before I can start thinking about breaking any records, we have to make sure we qualify from our group and then take each game as it comes.

Dida, Cafu, Roque Junior, Lucio, Roberto Carlos, Emerson, Ze Roberto, Kaka, Ronaldinho, Adriano and Ronaldo. How do you compare the current Brazil side with the team that won in 2002? (Roque Junior was subsequently omitted from the final squad).

You can't compare the two teams, especially as we don't yet know if that will be the starting XI in Germany. I also prefer not to talk about any individual players. All I can say is that Brazil won in 2002, and we will be hoping to do the same this year.

It is well-documented that you make a point of respecting all your opponents, but who do you think will be the team to beat in Germany?

The strongest teams are definitely going to be the traditionally strong sides. There's no point singling out any one team who look better on paper as it counts for nothing. As far as the big names are concerned, then Brazil must be considered the strongest, but we have to prove that out on the pitch.

How do (Luiz Felipe) Scolari and Parreira differ?

There's no real difference. Both have won the World Cup so they're both winners. Naturally they favour different styles of management but the pair of them are first-class coaches.

Which manager has had the biggest influence on your career?

Tele Santana without a shadow of doubt. His recent death hit me really hard. I spoke to his daughter only recently when he was still seriously ill. It's a terrible shame. Brazilian football has undoubtedly lost one of its biggest names.

You will celebrate your 36th birthday just prior to this summer's tournament and have just extended your contract at Milan. How much longer will we be able to enjoy seeing you in action?

Cafu will turn thirty-six just before the World Cup commences in Germany, and the Brazilian International has no plan on ending his career just yet.

I still don't know. As you said, I've just extended my contract with Milan for another season and as long as I'm feeling good, then I'll keep on playing.

Do you plan to finish your career with a team close to your heart?

I'm not thinking about that at the moment. I don't see myself hanging up my boots for a long while yet!

When did you decide to pay a special tribute to your wife and your neighbourhood in Sao Paulo after lifting the trophy in 2002? (He wore a T-shirt with the name of the neighbourhood, Jardim Irene, and shouted his wife Regina's name as he lifted the Cup.)

I just thought of it there and then, it was all very spontaneous. I think that's why it was so special. It happened four years ago now and people still talk about it. That gesture really had a lot of impact.

Do you already have something in mind for this year's tournament?

No, I've haven't thought of anything yet.

Aside from helping Brazil to a sixth FIFA World Cup crown, are there any other medals that you dream of adding to your extensive collection?

My dream as a player is to win the Champions League, as that's the only title I haven't won yet. In a wider context and on a more personal level, I'd love to be able to see a more peaceful and less violent world, but that looks increasingly unlikely.

Ronaldinho is the man currently grabbing all the headlines, but just how important is your Milan team-mate, Kaka?

I think Kaka is just as important as Ronaldinho, just as all the rest of us are too. Basically, I don't think that there's any one player who is more important than anyone else. We will only win in Germany if we play together as a team. Great team spirit and a winning mentality are even more important than technical ability.

Celebrations for Brazil as Cafu lifts the World Cup trophy in 2002. Could the Brazilian veteran do the same in Germany in 2006?

WORLD NEWS

FIFA RANKINGS

(April 2006)

1	Brazil	830
2	Czech Republic	779
3	Netherlands	774
4	USA	760
5	Spain	759
6	Mexico	758
7	France	754
8	Portugal	753
8	Argentina	753
10	England	744
11	Denmark	738
12	Nigeria	737
13	Turkey	733
14	Italy	731
15	Cameroon	723
16	Sweden	717
17	Japan	709
18	Egypt	708
19	Greece	699
19	Germany	699
21	Tunisia	694
22	Iran	692
22	Uruguay	692
24	Croatia	690
25	Romania	687
26	Costa Rica	686
27	Colombia	684
28	Poland	682
29	Senegal	681
30	Korea Republic	678
30	Republic of Ireland	678
32	Côte d'Ivoire	668
33	Paraguay	657
34	Saudi Arabia	655
35	Switzerland	651
36	Morocco	649
37	Russia	648
38	Bulgaria	642
39	Ecuador	636
40	Norway	634
41	Ukraine	616
41	Honduras	616
43	Slovakia	615
44	Australia	614
44	Jamaica	614
46	Serbia and Montenegro	612
47	Trinidad and Tobago	607
47	Israel	607
49	Finland	604
50	Ghana	602
51	South Africa	598
52	Guinea	597
52	Iraq	597
54	Bahrain	593
55	Zimbabwe	590
56	Zambia	583
56	Belgium	583
58	Angola	578
59	Togo	574
59	Uzbekistan	574
61	Guatemala	572
62	Scotland	564
63	Bosnia-Herzegovina	563
64	Belarus	559
65	Mali	556
66	China PR	549
67	Chile	548
67	Peru	548
69	Latvia	547
70	Congo DR	546
71	Slovenia	544
71	Venezuela	544
73	Kuwait	540
74	Wales	540
75	Hungary	538
76	Austria	537
76	Qatar	537
78	United Arab Emirates	536
79	Cuba	533
79	Estonia	533
81	Panama	526
82	Oman	524
83	Jordan	519
84	Canada	517
85	Libya	515
86	Albania	514
87	Algeria	511
88	Korea	509

England can cope with Rooney loss — Pele

Courtesy fifa.com

Pele believes England can reach the final of this year's FIFA World Cup even if striker Wayne Rooney fails to recover from injury.

The Brazil great, himself a three-times FIFA World Cup winner, has told English fans not to despair ahead of the start of next month's finals in Germany, citing his own experience as proof that an injury to one player need not prevent a team from winning the Trophy.

Rooney remains set to travel with the England squad but the 20-year-old Manchester United forward will likely miss most of England's group stage matches at least, after breaking a foot bone just six weeks before the tournament.

Brazilian great Pele believes England team can still go far in Germany, even without star-striker Wayne Rooney

"I think in the last four years, there is no doubt England have improved a lot," Pele, in Britain to promote his autobiography, said Thursday. "In the last ten years they have been the best organised team and have a good chance to get to the final, no doubt.

"Unfortunately for England they have a problem with Rooney having broken his foot. He is a fantastic player and is a big loss for England. He is very important for the team. Who in England has the same level to replace him? England do not have anyone at the same level at the moment.

"This is a big problem but even without him I think England are a very strong team for this World Cup."

Pele burst onto the international stage in Sweden in 1958 when, as a 17-year-old, he starred in Brazil's first FIFA World Cup final win. Four years later he was a member of the squad that defended the trophy in Chile before taking a leading role in the 1970 FIFA World Cup-winning team in Mexico - perhaps the greatest team ever to claim the title.

But Pele had plenty of injury setbacks along the way. His semi-final hat-trick and goal double in 1958 came after a knee injury had ruled him out of the opening games.

And in Chile a groin problem limited him to just two appearances. Then, in England in 1966 - when the hosts' win gave them the FIFA World Cup for the only time thus far - Pele was relentlessly fouled by opponents on the way to Brazil's surprisingly early exit.

So it was no surprise that former forward Pele, now 65, backed England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson in the Swede's decision to take Rooney with him to Germany.

"I think it is (right) because it will give confidence to the team. If the doctor thinks he can be recalled, I think it is good, it makes sense for the team and the group.

"In my first World Cup I did not play the first games in Sweden because I was injured. But then I came in and the same could happen to Rooney. What he has is a little more complicated than what I had. I twisted my knee, he broke his foot, but today the new technology and medicine is much better than before. I think Rooney is very important for the competition."

Eriksson has shed his image as a dour yet consistent selector by including Arsenal teenager Theo Walcott in his FIFA World Cup squad. The 17-year-old has not played first-team football since joining the Gunners from Championship outfit Southampton in January.

But Pele, who knows better than most what it is like to go from near obscurity to global stardom in a short space of time, said there was no way his situation was comparable to that of Walcott.

"Nobody has seen him play, even his team-mates have not played a game with him. It was different for me because when I was 16 I played in a tournament against Argentina, so when I was at the World Cup I had played several games.

"When I went to Sweden I had a little bit of experience even though I was the youngest player. He has never played. It is difficult to say something about how he is going to perform but he was selected because he is a good player.

"It is very difficult to say what is going to happen because he does not have the experience."

A clearer indication meanwhile of Rooney's fitness will emerge on 25 May when he is due to have a scan on his problem foot.

Meanwhile, Pele believes it will be harder for his Brazil to win a sixth World Cup because it is the favourite.

Pressure, high expectations and bad luck have cost many past favourites, and the 2002 World Cup winner faces the same hurdle, said during British visit.

"That's the big problem," he said.

"Today the big opponent of Brazil is being the favourite. Always in the World Cup, the favourite doesn't succeed."

The 65-year-old Pele, who won three World Cups for Brazil as a player, listed several teams who were tripped up after being tabbed the favourite.

He cited the 1982 Brazilian team - Italy beat Germany in the final that year - and the Dutch teams of 1974 and 1978.

"If you remember in the last World Cup in Korea and Japan, Italy and France were favourites from Europe and Argentina was the best team from South America, and neither qualified from their groups," he said.

The football icon said England's decision to select unknown 17-year-old striker Theo Walcott isn't the same as when he was selected at 17 for the 1958 finals.

Pele made his debut for his hometown club Santos at 15, and played for Brazil against Argentina at 16, months before leading his country to its first World Cup victory in Sweden, scoring in the final against the host.

Walcott has yet to play a single game for his team, Arsenal in the English Premier League.

"He has never played. He is going to be right in a big competition like the World Cup without having experience," Pele said.

"Nobody can expect him to come onto the field and save his team."

FIFA RANKINGS

(April 2006)

89	Burkina Faso	503
90	Syria	502
91	FYR Macedonia	492
92	Singapore	483
93	Rwanda	478
94	Kenya	476
95	Sudan	473
96	Northern Ireland	471
97	Uganda	470
97	Iceland	470
99	Lithuania	465
100	Cyprus	464
101	Bolivia	461
101	Georgia	461
103	Botswana	456
104	Haiti	453
104	Moldova	453
106	Gabon	452
107	Malawi	441
108	Thailand	440
109	Armenia	421
110	Indonesia	407
111	Congo	402
112	Azerbaijan	395
113	Ethiopia	393
114	Benin	389
115	Palestine	387
116	Hong Kong	382
117	India	379
118	Barbados	377
119	Turkmenistan	376
120	New Zealand	374
121	Lebanon	373
122	Cape Verde Islands	364
123	Malta	363
124	Liechtenstein	361
125	Tajikistan	358
125	Vietnam	358
127	Malaysia	350
128	Andorra	348
128	El Salvador	348
130	St. Lucia	336
131	Yemen	331
132	St. Kitts and Nevis	330
133	Mozambique	328
133	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	328
135	Sri Lanka	324
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WORLD NEWS

Copa Libertadores

Courtesy fifa.com

By the time the Copa Libertadores returns to action on 18 July, international football will have a new world champion. South America's biggest club tournament has drawn to a temporary halt at the quarter-final stage, with dozens of the continent's top players representing their countries at the 2006 FIFA World Cup Germany™. What better time to take stock of all the thrills and spills of the competition so far...

Only eight remain

Of the 38 teams that kicked off the preliminary qualifying round on 24 January, only eight remain. Mexican side Chivas; Liga Deportiva Universitaria of Ecuador; Brazilian outfits Internacional and Sao Paulo FC; the Argentine trio of River Plate, Velez Sarsfield and Estudiantes de La Plata; and Paraguay's Libertad are all still in the race to be crowned South America's number one club side.

Just two of the eight remaining clubs were involved in the preliminary round, which gave access to the group stages. Chivas disposed of Chile's Colo Colo, while River Plate overcame the challenge of Bolivia's Oriente Petrolero.

Of the eight quarter-finalists, only four have previously tasted Copa Libertadores glory. Those of a superstitious nature may well favour River Plate, with Los Millonarios having taken the trophy in 1986 and 1996 as well as reaching the final in 1976. Sao Paulo emerged victorious in 1992, 1993 and 2005, becoming the first Brazilian side to claim a hat-trick of Libertadores wins. Estudiantes de La Plata, for their part, will forever hold a special place in the tournament's history as a consequence of their legendary triple success in 1968, 1969 and 1970. Velez Sarsfield, meanwhile, are another member of this illustrious club, having taken the continental crown back in 1994.

When the dust had settled on the hotly-contested group stages, only three of the sixteen sides remaining still had their unbeaten records intact: Velez Sarsfield, who had the best record during the group stage, Internacional and Chivas Guadalajara. However, both the Brazilian and Mexican club saw their unbeaten runs come to an end at the knockout stages, Internacional losing to Liga Deportiva Universitaria in their quarter-final first leg, and Chivas going down 3-1 to Colombia's Independiente Santa Fe in the second leg of their last sixteen clash. After losing just once on their way to last year's crown (against Mexico's Tigres in the quarter-finals), reigning champions Sao Paulo have been unable to repeat the feat this time around, hitherto suffering two defeats (at home to Chivas and away to Estudiantes de La Plata).

Velez Sarsfield deserve a special mention, having racked up six wins and three draws from their nine games thus far. With coach Miguel Angel Russo at the helm, Velez are keen to follow in the footsteps of their 1994 Copa Libertadores-winning side, which had Carlos Bianchi in the dugout and Paraguayan legend Jose Luis Chilavert between the sticks.

Springing a surprise

At first glance, three teams stand out as the least fancied sides left in this year's competition: LDU Quito, Libertad, and Estudiantes de La Plata. LDU have enjoyed a remarkable campaign under the guidance of Peruvian coach Juan Carlos Oblitas, earning the admiration of fans and neutrals alike with their stylish football.

Libertad favour a more rugged approach, their pragmatic style taking them through a difficult group that included River Plate, El Nacional from Ecuador and Brazil's Paulista FC. The Paraguayans then overcame Tigres on penalties in the last sixteen, before giving *Los Millonarios* an almighty scare in the quarter-final first-leg, coming away with a 2-2 draw from Buenos Aires's Estadio Monumental.

Estudiantes de La Plata, known within South America as *Los Pincharratas* (The Ratcatchers), have captured the popular imagination thanks to their Libertadores pedigree and fanatical supporters. A late charge saw them claim second place in a group containing La Paz outfit Bolívar, Colombia's Independiente Santa Fe and Sporting Cristal of Peru. Estudiantes then came through a tough tie with Brazil's Goiás in the last sixteen, before securing a last-gasp win over defending champions Sao Paulo in the quarter-final first leg.

O Timao go off course

Big-spending Brazilian side Corinthians, known as O Timao (The Rudder), surprised many by crashing out at the last sixteen stage, having built what looked to be a world-class team. Boasting the likes of Argentine internationals Carlos Tevez and Javier Mascherano, Corinthians qualified from a group containing Colombia's Deportivo Cali, Chile's Universidad Catolica and Mexico's Tigres.

However, the Brazilians will have to wait at least another year for their first Copa Libertadores success after an under-strength River Plate followed up their 3-2 win in the Monumental with a shock 3-1 victory on Brazilian soil despite lacking several key players through injury.

Carlos Tevez vesting the Boca Juniors uniform will be vital to Argentina's chances at the World Cup. Tevez now vests the green and white of Brazilian club-side Corinthians, and the Brazilian side will be hoping that Tevez can lead them to the Copa Libertadores trophy in July.

Sharpshooters battle it out

Twelve players currently share top spot in the goalscoring stakes with five goals apiece, although only seven have the chance to add to their tally: Aloisio of Sao Paulo FC; Jose Luis Calderon and Mariano Pavone, both of Estudiantes; Agustin Delgado and Patricio Urrutia of Liga Deportiva Universitaria; Velez's Sebastian Ereros, and River Plate's Daniel Montenegro.

Who will follow in the unerring footsteps of Cerro Porteno's Gabriel Salcedo, top scorer in 2005 with nine goals?

There is still all to play for, with fans across South America eagerly awaiting 18 July's quarter-final second legs and the chance to continue their bid for continental glory.

Beckham Wants To End Career In Madrid

England captain David Beckham wants to end his playing career at Real Madrid.

Beckham told ITV1 in a documentary to be screened this week: "At the end of my career, I want to be known as a player who played at a top level, for the best teams.

"And they do not come much better and much bigger than Manchester United and Real Madrid."

David Beckham celebrates a goal for Real Madrid with team-mate Roberto Carlos (right)

31-year-old Beckham also revealed that he was deeply upset when he left United three years ago, but is now very settled in Spain and may not return to England when he retires.

He said: "I think at the time, when I had signed for Real Madrid, and when I got home, I think I actually cried because, you know, it was Manchester United, it was a team that I had been at for my whole life.

"But now I want to settle down in Spain, my family is happy here, I am happy playing football here."

His footballing ambition now is to become England's most-capped player.

"I want to carry on playing for the country and leading England out as much as possible and for as many games as possible," he said.

"I would love to get Bobby Moore or Sir Bobby Charlton's record of caps. I would love to reach that number of caps."

Moore won 108 England caps, Charlton 106. Peter Shilton is England's most capped player with 125. Beckham currently has 87.

Dirk Kuyt eyes an English move

Dirk Kuyt in action for the Dutch National team.

Feyenoord striker Dirk Kuyt has issued a 'come and get me' plea to Newcastle.

The Prolific Dutchman, who will be present at this summer's World Cup, has also been linked with the likes of Arsenal, Real Madrid and Tottenham.

But he said: "I would love to play in the North-East. When I was young I loved Italian football. But only because Van Basten, Rijkaard and Gullit were playing for AC Milan.

"Now I'd rather play in England. I love English football. I also think my style of play is completely right for the Premiership. "A club like Newcastle would be my dream."

Newcastle are currently looking for a replacement for Alan Shearer.

WORLD CUP NEWS

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY MATCHES

Paraguay held to 2-2 draw by Norway

World Cup-bound Paraguay finally woke up in the second half of their friendly against Norway to leave Oslo with a 2-2 draw after showing some of the spirit that won them a place in Germany.

Norway was leading 1-0 at the break thanks to a goal by Frode Johnsen who headed home unopposed from a free-kick after 21 minutes with four Paraguay defenders looking on.

The South Americans had been reduced to a handful of long balls during a half-heared first-half performance and apart from an effort disallowed for offside did not threaten to score.

The Paraguayans looked a totally different side in the second period and within minutes captain Carlos Gamarra, in his 105th game for his country, headed the equaliser.

Nelson Heado Valdez put the visitors ahead moments later with his third international goal when he latched on to a looping through ball and unleashed a searing first-time strike.

Norway, who failed to qualify for the FIFA World Cup after losing a play-off with Czech Republic, were very competitive and Johnsen scored with another header on the hour to claim a deserved draw.

Paraguay coach Anibal Ruiz was happy with the performance and said it was good test against north European opponents. "In South America we are not used to this strong physical football, the type that Sweden and England will play," he said.

Paraguay have qualified for the past three FIFA World Cups and reached the last 16 in 1998 and 2002. They play Sweden, England and Trinidad and Tobago in their Group B matches next month.

Ruiz said first-choice striker Roque Santa Cruz did not play because he is still recuperating after damaging his knee playing for Bayern Munich in October but he will be fit and ready for Germany.

Morocco late show sinks US

After watching his captain Claudio Reyna limp off after 15 minutes, United States coach Bruce Arena's woes were compounded when his side conceded a late goal to lose out to Morocco in a friendly.

The game, played before nearly 26,000 fans in Nashville, Tennessee, marked the first time in 2006 that Arena has had a full-strength squad at his disposal. And while it will have been heartening for the coach to see John O'Brien complete a productive and pain-free 45 minutes, the 1-0 loss and the knock picked up by team leader Reyna will have left fingernails shorter than normal in the technical area.

The opening 20 minutes were defined largely by a lack of fluidity from the finals-bound home side as they struggled to come to grips with the high-tempo play of the Moroccans. To make matters worse for the US, just ten minutes in, captain Reyna began to show signs of a recurrence of an old hamstring injury.

Josh Wolff, Donovan and second-half substitute Eddie Johnson all went close to scoring as the clock ticked down but an error from Steve Cherundolo – who dallied on the ball in a dangerous position – saw him stripped of possession by Bouchaib El Moubarki. The substitute quickly picked out fellow late replacement Mohamed Madihi racing in on goal.

The striker made no mistake as he ghosted past his man and slammed over the sprawling Keller – who had been called into action precious few times on the night – to seal victory at the death.

Chile too hot for Irish

Steve Staunton suffered his first defeat in charge of Republic of Ireland after they went down 1-0 to Chile at Lansdowne Road on Wednesday night.

Manuel Iturra's first goal for his country was enough to give Chile a deserved win against a lacklustre Irish side.

The defeat was not the best way for Staunton to prepare for their Euro 2008 qualifier with Germany in September, with just one more friendly before the campaign gets under way.

Chile started the brighter of the two sides and they were almost gifted the lead after just seven minutes after a dreadful mistake by debutant Stephen Kelly.

Kelly's poor back pass fell straight to Chile forward Reinaldo Navia right in front of goal, but after rounding Shay Given, he found the angle too tight and could only fire his shot wide of the open goal.

Robbie Keane wasted a good opening three minutes later when he latched onto Kevin Doyle's flick on, but the Tottenham Hotspur ace got his attempted chip all wrong, hitting it harmlessly into the arms of Claudio Bravo.

Steve Staunton, the Rep. of Ireland's new man at the helm collected a first-up loss at the hands Chile.

Liverpool ace Mark Gonzalez showed his attacking prowess on 19 minutes when he cut inside two Irish challenges and curled in a shot which Given saved.

Gonzalez called Given into the action again on 33 minutes with a swerving free kick which the Newcastle United goalkeeper collected comfortably.

Chile continued to look the most likely to score and Luis Jimenez flashed a shot from the edge of area just over the crossbar on 37 minutes.

A minute later, the home side missed a good chance to break the deadlock when Damien Duff's cross fell to Kevin Kilbane inside the box, but the Everton man took too long over his shot allowing the Chilean defence to get back to block the effort.

The South Americans picked up where they left off at the start of the second half, with Humberto Suazo playing a neat one-two with Gonzalez before curling in a shot which Given was forced to push round for a corner.

The visitors deservedly broke the deadlock on 49 minutes when a free kick from Gonzalez caused confusion inside the Ireland box and after Dunne failed to clear the danger, Iturra was on hand to score from close range.

Ireland had claims for a penalty turned down on 65 minutes when substitute Ian Harte's free kick appeared to strike the arm of Jorge Vargas.

Duff went close to equalising for Ireland nine minutes from time when substitute Jason Byrne headed Harte's long ball into the Chelsea winger's path on the edge of the box and he fired in a shot which Bravo did well to save.

Chile were inches away from doubling their lead in the final minute when Jimenez curled a free kick from the edge of the box just past the far post.

Swede's muster up scoreless draw

Sweden could only manage a goalless draw against neighbours Finland after a low-key performance at the Ullevi stadium in Gothenburg.

Sweden played the whole game without stars Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Henrik Larsson and Fredrik Ljungberg, with AFC Ajax's Markus Rosenberg and Brondby IF's Johan Elmander spearheading the attack in their absence in front of 25,000 spectators.

Elmander showed plenty of energy but failed to convert the chances that fell to him, but there was better news in defence where Erik Edman looked sharp despite a month's injury lay-off.

Coach Lars Lagerback gave both Mikael Nilsson and Niclas Alexandersson the chance to shine at right-back, with Nilsson the more comfortable player on the day. Sweden face Chile in their next friendly on 2 June.

England's fringe team players lose at home

A team of fringe members of England's World Cup squad lost 2-1 against ten-man Belarus at the Madejski stadium in Reading. Sergei Kornilenko beat Scott Carson from a tight angle with nine minutes remaining for the winner on a miserable night for England goalkeepers.

Earlier, second-choice keeper Robert Green was stretchered off with a groin injury after falling awkwardly while taking a goal-kick.

With Green floored, Vitali Kutuzov was able to cancel out England's opener, which came after 35 minutes when Jermaine Jenas netted from close range after Michael Owen's header hit the crossbar. Teenager Theo Walcott made an exciting cameo appearance in the second half while Belarus's Sergei Omelyanchuk was dismissed on 74 minutes for two bookable offences.

Australia ready to erase unhappy memories of 1974

Australia will be gunning for their first victory at a World Cup when they head back to Germany after a 32-year absence from the finals.

In their only previous World Cup appearance in West Germany in 1974, a rag-tag collection of Australians lost to East Germany and West Germany and drew with Chile. They went home without scoring a goal.

Although they now face world champions Brazil, Croatia and Asian champions Japan in Group F, they look capable of scoring goals and taking points off Croatia and Japan.

Soccer has changed totally in Australia over the last 32 years and although the game is less popular than Australian Rules football, tennis, rugby and cricket, the country has produced some top-level individuals for clubs across Europe.

The Australians can take heart from having experienced Dutch coach Guus Hiddink at the helm and a marked improvement in the form of Liverpool playmaker Harry Kewell, who made a strong finish to the season after battling back from injuries.

Hiddink, widely respected even before he guided South Korea to the semi-finals in 2002, is certain to get the best out of his men.

Kewell, though, is the key. If he produces his club form at the finals and his team mates play to be the best of their abilities, Australia could yet join the dog-fight for a runners-up place behind expected group winners Brazil.

RICH TRADITION

For a country with such a successful sporting tradition, Australia have been one of the great under-achievers in soccer and made history by qualifying for this tournament.

Their dramatic playoff win over Uruguay, sealed with John Aloisi's penalty shoot-out goal, meant they became the first country to qualify for the finals on penalties.

While the 1974 team was comprised of amateur or semi-professional players, today's side includes Kewell and Middlesbrough striker Mark Viduka.

Viduka's ambling gait belies some great ball skills and a real eye for goal, while keeper Mark Schwarzer, midfielders Brett Emerton and Stan Lazaridis and forward Tim Cahill are also regulars in the English Premier League.

Whether they have the resilience to cope with the rigours of tournament football, though, remains to be seen.

Australia's track record at least means they have nothing to lose in Germany, while there is every hope that the tournament will lift the profile of the game at home.

A move away from the Oceania confederation, which Australia dominated for years, to the more competitive Asian confederation can also only help soccer's cause.

Other domestic changes have seen Frank Lowy, Australia's second-richest man, set up a new board to run the game with a new elite national league, raising hopes of a brighter future.

Roos glad to have Hiddink

Australians have always thought of themselves as the lucky country but even the most optimistic cannot believe how fortunate they are to have Guus Hiddink coaching their national soccer team.

Australia have long been one of the great underachievers in football but in Hiddink they have finally found a man who really does seem to have the golden touch.

The Dutchman is one of the most sought-after coaches in world football and while his contract ends after the World Cup and he heads off to coach Russia, it was a major coup for Australia to secure his services.

He took over the reins last year when former coach Frank Farina stepped down and brought instant success; helping the Socceroos to qualify for the World Cup for the first time in 32 years with a nerve-racking penalty shoot-out win over Uruguay.

Now he has his sights set on Germany. Few would give Australia any chance of making an impact in a tough group that includes world champions Brazil, Croatia and Japan were it not for Hiddink.

The 59-year-old was an undistinguished professional player but has built up an extraordinarily successful CV as a coach, winning a stack of Dutch leagues and Dutch cups and a European Cup with PSV Eindhoven.

He was appointed Dutch national coach in 1995, leading the Netherlands to the quarter-finals of Euro 96 and then the semi-finals of the World Cup in France in 1998.

His willingness to travel saw him take up coaching roles in the United States, Turkey and Spain, where he won a World Club Cup with Real Madrid.

He then embarked on what many saw as his greatest challenge, coaching co-hosts South Korea at the 2002 World Cup.

South Korea had never won a match at the finals and only two Asian teams -- North Korea in 1966 and Saudi Arabia in 1994 -- had ever made it past the first round.

But under Hiddink, South Korea stormed through to the semi-finals.

He was given honorary citizenship, free flights on Korean Airlines for the rest of his life, a villa on a private island and had a World Cup Stadium re-named after him.

Expectations are now high in Australia that, having steered his team to their first World Cup finals since 1974, he can perform another miracle with the Socceroos.

WORLD NEWS

Athens to have final say in 2007

Courtesy uefa.com

An eventful UEFA Champions League season came to a conclusion on Wednesday in Paris, and the honour of hosting next season's final falls on another European football hotbed in Athens.

The Greek capital's Olympic Stadium will stage the 2006/07 showpiece on 23 May 2007 - its first European final since the venue was rebuilt to hold the 2004 Olympic Games. Athens previously staged the 1993/94 final, when AC Milan defeated FC Barcelona 4-0 at the OAKA Spiros Louis Stadium.

The 1986/87 UEFA European Cup Winners' Cup also came to a conclusion at that venue, as AFC Ajax defeated 1. FC Lokomotiv Leipzig 1-0.

Having hosted the first modern Olympics of 1896, Athens underwent a major revamp for the 2004 Games. An airport and metro system were built while the flagship Olympic Stadium was completely renovated. The 72,000-seat arena was upgraded by Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava and now features a distinctive new roof.

The UEFA Cup Final will be hosted by Hampden Park in Glasgow, Scotland.

The impressive Scottish venue will be staging its second European club final in five years, following the 2002 UEFA Champions League showpiece between Real Madrid CF and Bayer 04 Leverkusen, and officials from the Scottish Football Association (SFA) have been in Eindhoven to look at the preparatory work undertaken by their Dutch colleagues.

"The Dutch FA, PSV Eindhoven and the City of Eindhoven have worked hard to deliver a wonderful platform for the UEFA Cup final, and we look forward to the opportunity of emulating that success in Glasgow next year," said SFA chief executive David Taylor.

"To be awarded a major European final by UEFA for the second time in five years clearly reaffirms, in my opinion, the status of Scotland, Glasgow and the Scottish FA as a major event destination, host and organiser," he added. "Events of this size also deliver tremendous benefit to grassroots football. We should never forget that major European final nights fuel our younger generations' footballing dreams."

The SFA has already set up a proficient project management team including key partners from Hampden Park, Glasgow's city authorities and marketing office, the British airport authorities and Strathclyde police.

"I remember with great fondness the fantastic atmosphere in the city for the Champions League final in May 2002," said Alex Mosson, chairman of Glasgow City Marketing Bureau and Glasgow City Council's spokesperson on marketing and events. "We learned a lot in 2002 and I'm delighted that many of the same people involved back then are part of the partnership in place to deliver 2007."

David Kells, managing director of Hampden Park, was similarly enthused. "This will be Hampden's sixth major European final, and we look forward to it continuing the high standard set in the previous matches and producing another outstanding night at Scotland's national stadium."

UEFA is happy to be returning to the scene of some of its most famous nights. Hampden Park has hosted three European Champion Clubs' Cup/UEFA Champions League finals: the 2002 showpiece, which Madrid won 2-1; the 1976 game, when FC Bayern Munchen beat AS Saint-Etienne 1-0; and perhaps the most memorable of all finals in 1960, when more than 127,000 people crammed into the ground to witness the 7-3 victory of the great Madrid side of Di Stéfano, Puskas and Gento over Eintracht Frankfurt.

"The UEFA Cup has moved on a long way from those early pioneer days of European football, and so have the grounds and the stadia that host the matches," said UEFA Chief Executive Lars-Christer Olsson.

"Most importantly, football is made up of memories, of passion and of emotion and we know that in coming to Scotland and to Glasgow, we will get this in abundance."

Celtic profit from Barca triumph

FC Barcelona's victory in the UEFA Champions League final means all 16 automatic qualifiers for next season's group stage are known - with Celtic FC taking the last remaining berth.

Had Arsenal FC taken the European crown, they would have been exempt from qualifying as holders. However, having finished fourth in England they must now enter the third qualifying round, and since Barcelona as Spanish champions already had a group-stage place, Scottish title-winners Celtic will grab the spare slot due to their nation's co-efficient — which will mean no repeat of the Glasgow club's qualifying defeat by FC Artmedia last summer.

Celtic players and supporters are relieved to have avoided the Champions League preliminary round. Last season, the Scottish Champions missed out on the Champions League main draw after falling to Artmedia Bratislava.

Barcelona's triumph is also good news for three other teams. As the holders had already booked their ticket through their domestic league, Israeli champions Maccabi Haifa FC enter the third qualifying round, with Sweden's Djurgårdens IF and the eventual Slovakian title-winners going into the second qualifying round, all one stage further than would have been the case.

Real Madrid CF made sure of an automatic group-stage berth on Tuesday by pipping Valencia CF to second position in Spain. Valencia will be joined in the third qualifying round by CA Osasuna, who secured their first participation in Europe's premier club competition by beating UEFA Cup winners Sevilla FC to fourth spot.

The other sides already scheduled to be in August's group-stage draw along with Barcelona, Madrid and Celtic are: Chelsea FC, Manchester United FC, Juventus, AC Milan, Olympique Lyonnais, FC Girondins de Bordeaux, FC Bayern München, Werder Bremen, FC Porto, Sporting Clube de Portugal, PSV Eindoven, Olympiacos CFP and RSC Anderlecht.

Of the 57 teams to take part in qualifying, five are yet to be confirmed as league title races are still on in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Barca close to Forlan deal?

Diego Forlan has been followed by many European clubs. The Uruguayan International though, has stated that he would prefer to play his club football in the Spanish League.

Spanish media are reporting that Barcelona are expected to complete a €15 million purchase of striker Diego Forlan from Villarreal this week.

Barca are said to regard the Primera Liga's top scorer in 2004/05 as the ideal replacement for Henrik Larsson, who is returning to his Swedish homeland. Larsson was mainly deployed as back-up to Samuel Eto'o.

Uruguay International Forlan, previously at Manchester United where he struggled to impress, has also attracted interest from Valencia and some Serie A clubs from reports in Spain.

But he has been aware of Barca's interest for several months, and is said to prefer a move which would see him remain in Spain.

Barca are also thought to be ready to negotiate with Villarreal over their 25 per cent share in Juan Roman Riquelme, who is currently on loan at El Madrigal from the Camp Nou - in return for a reduction of the _23 million asking price for Forlan's contract.

Barcelona return as heroes

FC Barcelona were greeted by thousands of fans as they paraded through the city on an open-top bus to celebrate winning the UEFA Champions League.

On their return to Spain from Paris, captain Carles Puyol and coach Frank Rijkaard carried the trophy down the steps of the plane before the squad transferred to the city centre.

It was a rare appearance in the limelight by Rijkaard, with reports suggesting that Puyol had to convince him to come on to the victor's podium when the trophy was presented at the Stade de France following the 2-1 victory against Arsenal FC.

Barcelona city council had asked fans to avoid congregating at the airport so the festivities did not get started properly until the team arrived in the city harbour on a barge. From there the players, all wearing t-shirts with the club's slogan 'Mes que un club' (More than a club), boarded a bus to tour through the city streets.

Barcelona's Ronaldinho was brilliant throughout the Spanish side's tremendous run in the Champions League.

For the second time in two weeks the tour finished at Camp Nou where four giant screens were set up for an audio-visual display.

Barcelona's tremendous run in the Champions League was rewarded with the Champions League trophy.

ITALIAN SERIE A

Zoff back to Juve?

Dino Zoff could be heading towards a third stint with Juventus.

The legendary goalkeeper could return to the Bianconeri as the vice-President of the club.

Amidst all the scandal and dramas facing the Italian game at the moment, Dino Zoff might be on his way back to Turin after spending most of his past 15 years on the bench of Lazio, Fiorentina and even the Italian national team, apart from sitting behind the Biancocelesti's office desk.

It is rumoured that Juventus have been in contact with Zoff to take over the vice-President role left by Roberto Bettega, who resigned recently along with the whole Council of Administration.

Zoff would definitely be interested in this job and it would be his third Juve stint after that of a player and another stint as coach.

In the meantime, Franco Baldini has refused the position of General Director which has been left vacant by Luciano Moggi.

Zlatan awaits Real Bid

Juventus striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic is hoping that Real Madrid launch a bid to sign him, according to reports coming out of Spain.

With Juve possibly facing relegation to Serie B as a result of the match-foxing scandal in Italian football, the Swede may be on his out of the club.

According to La Marca, Ibrahimovic has told his agent he will not make any decision about his future until he knows whether Real will bid for him.

Barcelona has also been linked but the former Ajax star is said to favour the Spanish capital.

The Italian National team pose for the Official team photo. Question-marks still surround the Italianís chances at the World Cup as the current corruption investigations are taking their toll on the squad.

Marcello Lippi will not step down

As the investigations regarding various sections of Italian football continue to unfold, National boss Marcello Lippi has announced that he will not quit the Italian job before the World Cup.

Some members of the Italian media had wanted Lippi to stand down, after it had been alleged that he was present during some of the intercepted telephone calls that are being looked at during the GEA World investigation.

Lippi though, has received the full backing of the Italian Football Federation commissioner, Guido Rossi, and intends to concentrate solely on the job at hand.

"I have never had any doubts with regard to Lippi's position," commented Rossi.

The National team boss has been aware of the newspaper's opinion that he should resign and gave a statement on the situation.

"The media asked me to resign, but there are only two motives which push someone to take such a step," said Lippi.

"The first is if something is uncovered and you need to run away. The second when you have a clear conscience, but you are left disappointed."

Lippi also wanted to make that clear that any probes into the running of the Italian game are not distracting his squad and everyone is focused on Germany.

"The squad is serene and everyone is calm," he said.

"We must transform what is happening to us presently into something good, a positive force."

Italy are preparing two Friendly Internationals coming up in the next week. The first match in Switzerland against the Swiss National team, and the second, still in Switzerland, against the Ukraine.

Italy kick-off their World Cup campaign on the morning of Tuesday the 13th of June (AEST), against Ghana.

Zlatan Ibrahimovic (left) may well have played his final match for Juventus. Juve are awaiting the findings of huge investigations into match-fixing in the Italian Serie A.

Juan Sebastian Veron; furious with Adriano

Adriano Not That Good – Veron

Juan Sebastian Veron has launched a fierce attack on Inter team-mate Adriano, suggesting the Brazilian is overrated.

"If he played the way he talks, then Inter would already have won the Scudetto," he told a South American newspaper.

"Adriano feels himself on a pedestal that does not belong to him, seeing as heís neither Ronaldo nor Ronaldinho. I really hope he gets to play against Argentina in the World Cup."

The pair are known not to be the best of friends, and reportedly came to blows in the half-time break of the clubís Champions League quarter final defeat to Villarreal last season.

SERIE A

STANDINGS 2005-06

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	**38**	**27**	**10**	**1**	**71**	**24**	**91**
Milan	38	28	4	6	85	31	88
Internazionale	38	23	7	8	68	30	76
Fiorentina	38	22	8	8	66	41	74
Roma	38	19	12	7	70	42	69
Lazio	38	16	14	8	57	47	62
Chievo	38	13	15	10	54	49	54
Palermo	38	13	13	12	50	52	52
Livorno	38	12	13	13	37	44	49
Parma	38	12	9	17	46	60	45
Empoli	38	13	6	19	47	61	45
Ascoli	38	9	16	13	43	53	43
Udinese	38	11	10	17	40	54	43
Sampdoria	38	10	11	17	47	51	41
Reggina	38	11	8	19	39	65	41
Cagliari	38	8	15	15	42	55	39
Siena	38	9	12	17	42	60	39
Messina	38	6	13	19	33	59	31
Lecce	38	7	8	23	30	57	29
Treviso	38	3	12	23	24	56	21

TOP SCORERS

Toni L. (Fiorentina, 2 pens) 31
Trezeguet D. (Juventus) 23
Suazo D. (Cagliari, 5pen) 22
Lucarelli C. (Livorno, 4 pens), **Shevchenko A.** (Milan, 5 pens), **Tavano F.** (Empoli, 4 pens) .19
Gilardino A. (Milan, 1 pens) 17
Rocchi T. (Lazio) 16
Cruz J. (Inter, 3 pens), **Totti F.** (Roma, 6 pens)15
Kaka' R. (Milan, 3 pens) 14
Adriano L. (Inter, pens),
Di Napoli A. (Messina, 3 pens),
Pellissier S. (Chievo, 2 pen) 13
Del Piero A. (Juventus, 2pens), **Inzaghi F.** (Milan), **Mancini A.** (Roma 3 pens) 12

SERIE B

Atalanta 0 Modena 1, Bari 1 Triestina 1, Bologna 3 Catanzaro 0, Catania 2 Albinoleffe 1, Cesena 2 Verona 1, Crotone 4 Brescia 2, Mantova 0 Pescara 0, Piacenza 2 Arezzo 3, Ternana 0 Avellino 2, Torino 3 Cremonese 0, Vicenza 0 Rimini 0

Atalanta, Catania and **Torino** promoted to Serie A.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Atalanta	**42**	**24**	**9**	**9**	**61**	**39**	**81**
Catania	42	22	12	8	67	42	78
Torino	42	21	13	8	51	31	76
Mantova	42	18	15	9	46	35	69
Modena	42	17	16	9	59	41	67
Cesena	42	18	12	12	66	54	66
Arezzo	42	17	15	10	45	34	66
Bologna	42	16	16	10	55	42	64
Crotone	42	18	9	15	56	48	63
Brescia	42	15	15	12	54	44	60
Piacenza	42	13	15	14	56	52	54
Pescara	42	14	12	16	41	50	54
Bari	42	11	18	13	43	47	51
Triestina	42	12	15	15	44	51	51
Verona	42	10	19	13	42	41	49
Vicenza	42	13	10	19	38	49	49
Rimini	42	11	15	16	42	49	48
Albinoleffe	42	10	16	16	38	52	46
Avellino	42	11	13	18	42	62	46
Ternana	42	7	18	17	36	58	39
Cremonese	42	6	12	24	36	60	30
Catanzaro	42	7	7	28	26	63	28

ENGLISH NEWS

Ferguson quashes Rooney World Cup rumours

Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson has rubbished suggestions that he does not want injured star Wayne Rooney to go to the World Cup.

English reports have hinted at a simmering club versus country row between United and the England camp regarding Rooney's fitness and prospects of being involved in Germany.

Rooney has been allowed by Manchester United to join up with the England party on Sunday for next week's friendlies, then fly to Germany with them on 5 June before flying back to Manchester on 14 June for the next scan on his broken foot, which is healing satisfactorily.

Sir Alex Ferguson, speaking to MUTV, United's own TV channel, stated that he wants Rooney to be in Germany 100%.

"The most damaging thing which has been said is that we do not want Wayne Rooney to go.

"If there is one player I want to play in the World Cup, it is him. Wayne is a major player for our football club and I want him at the World Cup. I have told him that from day one."

Ferguson, who spoke to Eriksson late last week, also said it was 'nonsense' to suggest United would sue England if Rooney suffered any further injury in Germany.

Happier times for Sir Alex Ferguson and Wayne Rooney (right)

Sven Goran Eriksson on the other hand is looking forward to the arrival of Rooney to the English camp.

"I am looking forward to Wayne joining up with the rest of the squad.

"I spoke to Sir Alex Ferguson today and we had a really good conversation. Despite all the speculation, there has been a very positive dialogue with Manchester United all along.

"We are very grateful for the support that they have given Wayne and the England team. We are still hoping the second scan will show further improvement and that Wayne can play his part in the World Cup.

"The fact that he is flying out to Germany with us will give everyone a huge lift."

After playing Paraguay in Frankfurt on 10 June, England go on to face Trinidad & Tobago in Nuremberg on 15 June and Sweden in Cologne on 20 June.

Eriksson to feature his first team in warm-ups

England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson will prepare for a World Cup without Wayne Rooney by playing his first-choice lineup in two friendlies this week.

England plays Jamaica on June 3 at Old Trafford in Manchester, with Peter Crouch partnering Michael Owen up front.

"We need to start the best team, the team we think will start the World Cup, in both games," Eriksson said.

Rooney had another scan on his broken right foot on Thursday and the earliest he is likely to be available at the tournament is the round of 16 on June 24 or 25.

Without Rooney, Owen will England's key striker. The 26-year-old Newcastle forward is going to his third World Cup.

England: Paul Robinson, Gary Neville, Rio Ferdinand, John Terry, Ashley Cole, David Beckham, Steven Gerrard, Frank Lampard, Joe Cole, Michael Owen, Peter Crouch.

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

League Champions Chelsea
Chelsea, Man Utd into Champions League main draw.
Liverpool and **Arsenal** into Champions League Preliminary round draw.
Birmingham, Sunderland and **WBA** have been relegated to the Championship division.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	38	29	4	5	72	22	91
Man Utd	38	25	8	5	72	34	83
Liverpool	38	25	7	6	57	25	82
Arsenal	38	20	7	11	68	31	67
Tottenham	38	18	11	9	53	38	65
Blackburn	38	19	6	13	51	42	63
Newcastle	38	17	7	14	47	42	58
Bolton	38	15	11	12	49	41	56
West Ham	38	16	7	15	52	55	55
Wigan	38	15	6	17	45	52	51
Everton	38	14	8	16	34	49	50
Fulham	38	14	6	18	48	58	48
Charlton	38	13	8	17	41	55	47
Middlesbrough	38	12	9	17	48	58	45
Man City	38	13	4	21	43	48	43
Aston Villa	38	10	12	16	42	55	42
Portsmouth	38	10	8	20	37	62	38
Birmingham	38	8	10	20	28	50	34
West Brom	38	7	9	22	31	58	30
Sunderland	38	3	6	29	26	69	15

ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIP

League Championship Play-Off.
Sunday 21st May AEST Leeds 0 v Watford 3
Reading, Sheffield United and Watford promoted to English Premier League.
Crewe, Millwall and Brighton relegated to England Football League 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Reading	46	31	13	2	99	32	106
Sheff Utd	46	26	12	8	76	46	90
Watford	46	22	15	9	77	53	81
Preston	46	20	20	6	59	30	80
Leeds	46	21	15	10	57	38	78
Crystal Palace	46	21	12	13	67	48	75
Wolverhampton	46	16	19	11	50	42	67
Coventry	46	16	15	15	62	65	63
Norwich	46	18	8	20	56	65	62
Luton	46	17	10	19	66	67	61
Cardiff	46	16	12	18	58	59	60
Southampton	46	13	19	14	49	50	58
Stoke	46	17	7	22	54	63	58
Plymouth	46	13	17	16	39	46	56
Ipswich	46	14	14	18	53	66	56
Leicester	46	13	15	18	51	59	54
Burnley	46	14	12	20	46	54	54
Hull	46	12	16	18	49	55	52
Sheff Wed	46	13	13	20	39	52	52
Derby	46	10	20	16	53	67	50
QPR	46	12	14	20	50	65	50
Crewe	46	9	15	22	57	86	42
Millwall	46	8	16	22	35	62	40
Brighton	46	7	17	22	39	71	38

ENGLAND FOOTBALL LGE 1

Play-Offs Barnsley 0 Huddersfield 1, Swansea 1 Brentford 1, Brentford 0 Swansea 2
Wednesday 17th May AEST
Huddersfield 1 Barnsley 3
Saturday 27th May AEST
Swansea 2 Barnsley 2
(Barnsley won 4-3 on pens.)
Southend, Colchester, Barnsley promoted

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Southend	46	23	13	10	72	43	82
Colchester	46	22	13	11	58	40	79
Brentford	46	20	16	10	72	52	76
Huddersfield	46	19	16	11	72	59	73
Barnsley	46	18	18	10	62	44	72
Swansea	46	18	17	11	78	55	71
Nottm Forest	46	19	12	15	67	52	69
Doncaster	46	20	9	17	55	51	69
Bristol City	46	18	11	17	66	62	65
Oldham	46	18	11	17	58	60	65
Bradford	46	14	19	13	51	49	61
Scunthorpe	46	15	15	16	68	73	60
Port Vale	46	16	12	18	49	54	60
Gillingham	46	16	12	18	50	64	60
Yeovil	46	15	11	20	54	62	56
Chesterfield	46	14	14	18	63	73	56
Bournemouth	46	12	19	15	49	53	55
Tranmere	46	13	15	18	50	52	54
Blackpool	46	12	17	17	56	64	53
Rotherham	46	12	16	18	52	62	52
Hartlepool	46	11	17	18	44	59	50
Milton Keynes Dons	46	12	14	20	45	66	50
Swindon	46	11	15	20	46	65	48

Arsenal set to sign Rosicky

Arsenal are in the final stages of negotiations with Borussia Dortmund over the release of Czech Republic international Tomas Rosicky. Apparently there is a transfer release clause in his current contract with Dortmund that would facilitate Rosicky's move to Arsenal for around £6.8 million.

Tomas Rosicky will play an important role for the Czech Rep. at the World Cup in Germany.

The highly rated midfielder is currently with the Czech international squad in Austria as thy prepare for the World Cup, but on Monday he travelled to London with his manager Pavel Paska for further talks with Arsenal. Whilst there he took and passed a physical.

"I am surprised that no one has found out about this before," said Czech coach Karel Bruckner.

"I must now admit that Tomas is undergoing medical tests. We have tried to keep quiet about it but I have to admit that Tomas is there for a medical."

Rosicky made his international debut in 2000 against the Republic of Ireland and in 2001 he became the youngest winner ever of the Czech Player of the Year Award, a title he won again the following year.

Reo-Coker out of England squad

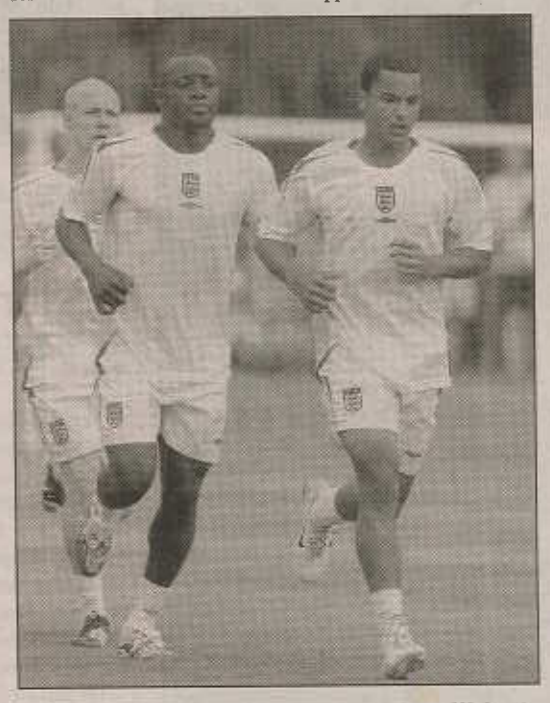
Nigel Reo-Coker has become the latest England injury casualty as he is forced to retire from selection with a back injury. It is believed Reo-Coker aggravated the persistent injury in training on Monday and is now out of the squad.

He will be replaced by Everton's Phil Neville, who joins Scott Carson, Michael Dawson, Jermain Defoe and Andrew Johnson on the five man standby list.

The West Ham United midfileder and captain is England's second casualty this week as Luke Young was forced to drop out of selection with an ankle injury early last week.

22-year-old Reo-Coker made his debut for Wimbledon in April 2002 where he had a spell as captain at the tender age of 20. In January 2004 the East Londoners signed him for an undisclosed amount and he quickly became their youngest ever 'skipper'.

Last season he made 38 league and cup appearances for the Hammers and has 12 appearances at Under 21 level for England, but is uncapped at senior level.



Nigel Reo-Coker (left) pictured with Theo Walcott during an England training session. News of Reo-Coker's injury comes at the end of a wonderful season for the Englishman at club level with West Ham.

EUROPE

TABLES AND RESULTS

What's on the Box

May

World Cup

ESPN Have confirmed that they will also show the following game:

England v Hungary
Wednesday 31 May
5.05 am EST
LIVE

***A reminder that the 2006 World Cup in Germany will be shown exclusive on SBS TV during the months of June and July. A full listing of matches will be shown in ABSW in forthcoming editions.**

RADIO

***Sunday Night Soccer**
98.5 FM in Sydney at 10pm
***Talking Football**
2SM 3-4pm Mon-Fri
***Football Fever**
2KY 1017am Sunday at 9pm

BELGIAN JUPILER LEAGUE

Champions – Anderlecht
Relegated – La Louviere
Promoted – Mons
Cup Winner – Zulte-Waregem
Lierse will compete in the relegation play-off with the 2nd, 3rd and 4th teams from the Belgian Second division.
The Belgian champion is qualified for the group stage of the UEFA Champions League while the runner-up must play the third preliminary round.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Anderlecht	**34**	**20**	**10**	**4**	**72**	**27**	**70**
2 Standard	34	19	8	7	51	28	65
3 Brugge	34	18	10	6	51	33	64
4 Gent	34	18	7	9	48	34	61
5 Genk	34	16	9	9	52	38	57
6.Beerschot	34	14	7	13	50	45	49
7 Waregem	34	14	7	13	51	49	49
8 Lokeren	34	12	11	11	48	49	47
9 Westerlo	34	13	7	14	42	48	46
10 Brussels	34	12	10	12	30	30	46
11 Charlerol	34	11	12	11	39	39	45
12 Roeselare	34	10	11	13	44	42	41
13 Mouscron	34	11	4	19	43	43	37
14 Cercle	34	10	7	17	38	61	37
15St-Truiden	34	8	10	16	36	49	34
16 Beveren	34	9	6	19	35	55	33
17 Lierse	34	8	8	18	22	52	32
18 La Louviere	34	4	14	16	26	56	26

CROATIAN FIRST DIVISION

Champions – Dinamo Zagreb
Relegated – Inter
Cup Winner - Varteks
The Croatian First League winner goes into the UEFA Champions League qualifying round and the runners-up go into the UEFA Cup, just like the winner of the Croatian Cup. Third and fourth place finishers go into the UEFA Intertoto Cup..

Croatian Promotion Play-offs

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Dinamo	**31**	**23**	**4**	**4**	**77**	**21**	**73**
2 Rijeka	31	20	5	6	61	35	65
3 Varteks	31	15	1	15	49	46	46
4 Osijek	31	13	5	13	31	47	44
5 Hajduk	31	10	9	12	38	33	39
6 Kamen	31	10	5	16	32	47	35
Croatian Relegation Play-offs							
1 Pula	**31**	**13**	**6**	**12**	**44**	**34**	**45**
2 Slaven	31	9	11	11	44	47	38
3 Zagreb	31	11	4	16	26	41	37
4 Cibalia	31	8	10	13	31	47	34
5 Medimurje	31	8	9	14	38	51	33
6 Inter	31	8	7	16	29	51	31

DUTCH EREDIVISE

Champions – PSV Eindhoven
Relegated – Roosendaal
Promoted – Excelsior
Cup Winners - Ajax
Champions League – Ajax
UEFA Cup - Heerenveen

At the end of each season, the bottom club is automatically relegate to the second division, the Eerste Divisie with the champion of the Eerste Divisie automatically promoted to the Eredivisie. The next two clubs from the bottom of the Eredivisie go to separate promotion/relegation playoffs.
The champion of the Eredivise automatically advances to the group phase of the Champions League. One place in the third qualifying round of the Champions League as well as three UEFA Cup spots are available for the best performing clubs in the playoffs. The remaining UEFA Cup place is awarded to the winner of the KNVB Cup.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 PSV	**34**	**26**	**6**	**2**	**71**	**23**	**84**
2 AZ	34	23	5	6	78	32	74
3 Feyenoord	34	21	8	5	79	34	71
4 Ajax	34	18	6	10	66	41	60
5 Groningen	34	16	8	10	46	43	56
6 Utrecht	34	16	7	11	48	44	55
7 Heerenveen	34	14	8	12	63	58	50
8 Roda	34	15	5	14	57	54	50
9 Twente	34	13	8	13	44	36	47
10 NEC	34	13	8	13	43	43	47
11 Vitesse	34	13	5	16	52	54	44
12 Waalwijk	34	11	6	17	48	58	39
13 Heracles	34	11	6	17	35	58	39
14 Sparta	34	10	7	17	34	50	37
15 Den Haag	34	10	5	19	36	62	35
16 NAC	34	8	9	17	45	66	33
17 Willem II	34	7	7	20	45	66	28
18 Roosendaal	34	1	6	27	22	90	9

FRENCH LIGUE 1

Champions – Lyon
Relegated – Toulouse, Troyes and Ajaccio
Promoted – Valenciennes, Sedan and Lorient
Cup Winners - PSG

The top three teams in Ligue 1 qualify for the Champions League, with the top two proceeding directly to the group phase. The third-placed team enters in the final qualifying round. The fourth-placed team qualifies for the UEFA Cup. The fifth- and sixth-placed teams can also qualify, depending on results in the two domestic cup competitions. The bottom three teams in the division are relegated to Ligue 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Lyon	38	25	9	4	73	31	84
2. Bordeaux	38	18	15	5	43	25	69
3. Lille	38	16	14	8	56	31	62
4. Lens	38	14	18	6	48	34	60
5. Marseille	38	16	12	10	44	35	60
6. Auxerre	38	17	8	13	50	39	59
7. Rennes	38	18	5	15	48	49	59
8. Nice	38	16	10	12	36	31	58
9. Paris SG	38	13	13	12	44	38	52
10. Monaco	38	13	13	12	42	36	52
11. Le Mans	38	13	13	12	33	36	52
12. Nancy	38	12	12	14	35	-37	48
13. St Etienne	38	11	14	13	29	39	47
14. Nantes	38	11	12	15	37	38	45
15. Sochaux	38	11	11	16	34	47	44
16. Toulouse	38	10	11	17	36	47	41
17. Troyes	38	9	12	17	37	47	39
18. Ajaccio	38	8	9	21	27	53	33
19. Strasbourg	38	5	14	19	33	56	29
20. Metz	38	6	11	21	26	59	29

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

Champions – Bayern Munich
Relegated – Kaiserslautern, Koln and Duisburg
Promoted – Bochum, Aachen and Cottbus
Cup Winners – Bayern Munich (Eintracht Frankfurt runner-up)

The top two clubs on the table qualify automatically for the group phase of the Champions League, while the third-place team enters the Champions League at the third qualifying round. The three teams at the bottom of the table are relegated into the 2nd Bundesliga, while the top three teams in the 2nd Bundesliga are promoted. Fourth and fifth-placed teams qualify for the UEFA Cup.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Bayern	34	22	9	3	67	32	75
2. Werder	34	21	7	6	79	37	70
3. Hamburger	34	21	5	8	53	30	68
4. Schalke	34	16	13	5	47	31	61
5. Leverkusen	34	14	10	10	64	49	52
6. Hertha BSC	34	12	12	10	52	48	48
7. Dortmund	34	11	13	10	45	42	46
8. Numberg	34	12	8	14	49	51	44
9. Stuttgart	34	9	16	9	37	39	43
10. Monchach	34	10	12	12	42	50	42
11. Mainz 05	34	9	11	14	46	47	38
12. Hannover	34	7	17	10	43	47	38
13. Arminia	34	10	7	17	32	47	37
14. Frankfurt	34	9	9	16	42	51	36
15. Wolfsburg	34	7	13	14	33	55	34
16. Kaiser	34	8	9	17	47	71	33
17. FC Koln	34	7	9	18	49	71	30
18. Duisburg	34	5	12	17	34	63	27

GREEK ETHNIKI KATIGORIA

Champions – Olympiakos
Relegated – OFI Crete, Kallithea and Akratitos
Promoted – Ergotelis, Kerkira and Aris Saloniki
Cup Winners – Olympiakos (AEK runner-up)

The champion directly enters the group stage of the UEFA Champions League, while the runner-up must survive a two-legged tie in the third qualifying round to advance to the group stage. The winner of the Greek Cup automatically enters the UEFA Cup, as well as the teams that finish third through fifth in Alpha Ethniki. If the cup winner is qualified for European competition by its league position, the losing cup finalist is granted a UEFA Cup berth. If both cup finalists are qualified for Europe by their league position, the sixth-place team in Alpha Ethniki is granted a UEFA Cup berth.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Olympiakos	**30**	**23**	**1**	**6**	**63**	**- 23**	**70**
2.PAO	30	21	4	5	55	- 23	67
3. AEK Athens	30	21	4	5	42	- 20	67
4. Iraklis	30	15	6	9	39	- 31	51
5. Xanthi	30	13	8	9	31	- 25	47
6. PAOK	30	13	7	10	44	- 31	46
7. Atromitos	30	12	6	12	36	- 37	42
8. Larisa	30	10	9	11	31	- 37	39
9. Kalamaria	30	10	8	12	32	- 36	38
10. Aigaleo	30	8	9	13	23	- 41	33
11. Ionikos	30	6	14	10	36	- 41	32
12. Panionios	30	9	5	16	33	- 45	32
13. Levadiakos	30	8	7	15	24	- 36	31
14. OFI	30	7	10	13	23	- 37	31
15. Kallithea	30	4	8	18	28	- 49	20
16. Akratitos	30	4	6	20	19	- 47	18

PORTUGUSE SUPER LIGA

Champions – FC Porto
Relegated – Rio Ave, Guimaraes and Penafiel
Promoted – Beira Mar, Aves and Leixoes
Cup Winners – FC Porto (Vitoria Setubal runner-up)

The top three teams in the SuperLiga qualify for the Champions League. The top two teams directly enter the group phase. The third placed team enters the competition at the third qualifying round, and must survive a two-legged knockout tie in order to enter the group phase. The teams classified in fourth and fifth enter the UEFA Cup together with the winner of thePortuguse Cup. Three clubs are relegated from the First-Division.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Porto	**34**	**24**	**7**	**3**	**54**	**16**	**79**
2 Sporting	34	22	6	6	50	24	72
3 Benfica	34	20	7	7	51	29	67
4 Braga	34	17	7	10	38	22	58
5 Nacional	34	14	10	10	40	32	52
6 Boavista	34	12	14	8	37	29	50
7 Leiria	34	13	8	13	44	42	47
8 Setbal	34	14	4	16	28	33	46
9 Amadora	34	12	9	13	31	33	45
10 Martimo	34	10	14	10	38	37	44
11 Pacos	34	11	9	14	38	49	42
12 Gil Vicente	34	11	7	16	37	42	40
13 Naval	34	11	6	17	35	48	39
14 Academica	34	10	9	15	37	48	39
15 Belenenses	34	11	6	17	40	42	39
16 Rio Ave	34	8	10	16	34	53	34
17 Guimaræes	34	8	10	16	28	41	34
18 Penafiel	34	2	9	23	21	61	15

SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Champions – Celtic
Relegated – Livingston
Promoted – St Mirren
Cup Winners – Celtic (Dunfermline runner-up)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	**38**	**28**	**7**	**3**	**93**	**37**	**91**
Hearts	38	22	8	8	71	31	74
Rangers	38	21	10	7	67	37	73
Hibernian	38	17	5	16	61	56	56
Kilmarnock	38	15	10	13	63	64	55
Aberdeen	38	13	15	10	46	40	54
Inverness CT	38	15	13	10	51	38	58
Motherwell	38	13	10	15	55	61	49
Dundee Utd	38	7	12	19	41	66	33
Falkirk	38	8	9	21	35	64	33
Dunfermline	38	8	9	21	33	68	33
Livingston	38	4	6	28	25	79	18

SPANISH PRIMERA LIGA

Champions – Barcelona
Relegated – Alaves, Cadiz and Malaga
Promoted – Recreativo, Gimnastic and Ciudad Murcia
Cup Winners – Espanyol (Zaragoza runner-up)

The top four placed Primera Divisi½n teams qualify for the Champions League. The fifth and sixth placed teams qualify for the UEFA Cup. A third UEFA Cup placed is awarded to the Copa del Rey winners or the seventh placed Primera Division team. The three last placed teams are relegated to the Segunda Division A.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1.Barcelona	38	25	7	6	80	35	82
2. Real Madrid	38	20	10	8	70	40	70
3. Valencia	38	19	12	7	58	33	69
4. Osasuna	38	21	5	12	49	43	68
5. Sevilla	38	20	8	10	54	39	68
6. Celta	38	20	4	14	45	33	64
7. Villarreal	38	14	15	9	50	39	57
8. Deportivo	38	15	10	13	47	45	55
9. Getafe	38	15	9	14	54	49	54
10. Atletico	38	13	13	12	45	37	52
11. Zaragoza	38	10	16	12	46	51	46
12. Athletic	38	11	12	15	40	46	45
13. Mallorca	38	10	13	15	37	51	43
14. Betis	38	10	12	16	34	51	42
15. Espanyol	38	10	11	17	36	56	41
16. Sociedad	38	11	7	20	48	65	40
17. Racing	38	9	13	16	36	49	40
18. Alaves	38	9	12	17	35	54	39
19. Cadiz	38	8	12	18	36	52	36
20. Malaga	38	5	9	24	36	68	24

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLIES

Korea Republic 1 Senegal 1, Austria 1 Croatia 4, USA 0 Morrocco 1, Uruguay 2 Romania 0, Hungary 2 New Zealand 0, Norway 2 Paraguay 2, Belgium 3 Turkey 3, Ireland 0 Chile 1, Colombia 1 Ecuador 1, Australia 1 Greece 0, Sweden 0 Finland 0, Korea Republic 2 Bosnia Herzegovina 0, Czech Republic 2 Saudi Arabia 0, Turkey 1 Ghana 1, USA 2 Venezuela 0, Northern Ireland 0 Romania 2, Germany 7 Luxembourg 0, Switzerland 1 Ivory Coast 1, Georgia 1 New Zealand 3, Wales 2 Trinidad & Tobago 1, Portugal 4 Cape Verde 1, Denmark 1 Paraguay 1, Serbia & Montenegro 1 Uruguay 1, Holland 1 Cameroon 0, France 1 Mexico 0, Colombia 0 Romania 0, Spain 0 Russia 0, Ukraine 4 Costa Rica 0, Mali 1 Morocco 0, Croatia 2 Iran 2, Ecuador 1 Republic of Macedonia 2, Estonia 1 Turkey 1

Socceroos VS Greece

Thursday May 25th 2006 (Melbourne-MCG-Australia)

FIFA WORLD CUP
GERMANY
2006

SOCCER